ROCKETEER
THE MOVIE

"I'VE NEVER SEEN A FILM OF THIS SCOPE AS FAITHFUL AS THIS ONE TO THE ORIGINAL PROPERTY, WHICH IS REALLY SAYING SOMETHING, ESPECIALLY COMING FROM THE CREATOR."

A DIALOG WITH THE ROCKETEER RACONTEUR

DAVE STEVENS

ILLUSTRATED WITH ART AND INSIGHTS A-PLENTY IN AN EPIC AND ENGAGING INTERVIEW!

DAVID ANTHONY KRAFT'S

COMICS INTERVIEW

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#97

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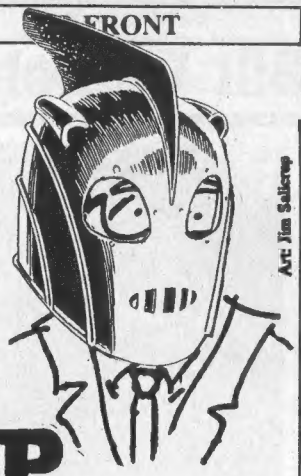

THE DAK-ETEER

Art: Jim Salicrup

UP FRONT

DAK GOES BATS

The impending release of the ROCKETEER movie has me eager with all the anticipation that — for whatever reasons — the DICK TRACY film (from the very same studio) was unable to excite.

The waiting and the wondering are all part of the fun, of course, even if one runs the risk of great expectations leading up to a possible letdown.

And thinking about and looking forward to major movies based on comics naturally brings to mind BATMAN II.

Among many rumors making the rounds is one to the effect that Warners has optioned film rights to a major DC graphic novel. When I first heard of this, my mind immediately leapt to **Frank Miller's** DARK KNIGHT and I imagined a daring, controversial departure for a motion picture sequel.

Why not skip the predictable and, having presented Batman's origin, now make the Dark Knight's last bow?

After all, the record-breaking BATMAN movie took the non-comics-reading public by surprise and shattered everyone's image of the campy character from TV, so why not take the world by surprise yet again? Think of the flurry it would cause, the attention it would get! Such a bold, brilliant stroke is quite possibly the *only* way the producers could *ever* hope to rival their previous effort.

Of course, it's not going to happen. And, alas, therein lies the danger of daydreaming and anticipating.

And the fun.

-Dak

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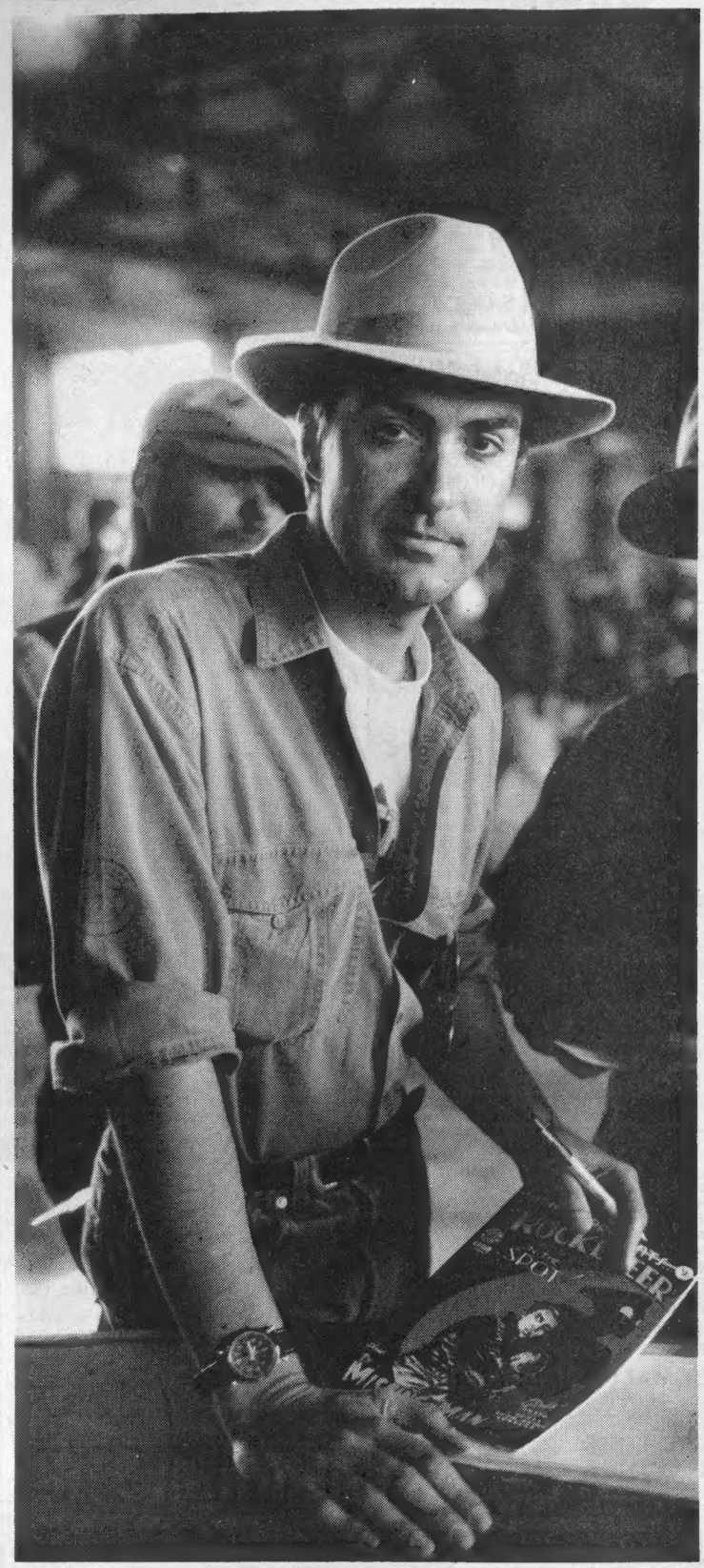
"When I saw Bill Campbell's test, I knew



I've been lucky to know Dave Stevens since the Rocketeer wasn't even a twinkle in his imagination, when Dave was still an aspiring young artist. We met through the San Diego Comics Convention, and it was impossible not to be bowled over, even in the mid-'70s, by the obvious talent bubbling under the surface of this self-effacing, good-looking guy. I was a DJ on a San Diego radio station back then, forcing Dave to bring me samples of his various comic strips on a regular basis. I would copy them, bring them home, study and drool over them, knowing that someday this talented kid would be one of the stars of comics, if he so chose.

We remained in touch over the years, getting together to study my collection of

THE ROCKETEER (the film) ©1991 The Walt Disney Company, all rights reserved / Rocketeer (the character) ©1991 Dave Stevens / Batgirl ©1991 DC Comics / Batgirl by Vargas ©1991 HMH Publications and Alberto Vargas Estate / Gil Elvgrin art © Gil Elvgrin / Robert McGinnis art © Robert McGinnis / Mike Shayne ©1991 Brett Holliday.

who Joe was going to pick. I was real happy."

DAVE STEVENS

Golden Age PLANET COMICS for their wonderful Maurice Whitman covers, or just to shoot the shit. Dave's wedding present to me in 1980 was a requested and still-treasured original drawing of Captain America facing off against the Red Skull.

It's been exciting to see Dave Stevens mature as an artist and writer, never fearing the challenge of a new field to explore and conquer. THE ROCKETEER movie is an example of both, and probably a hint of career paths to come for Dave. That's fine by me, so long as he occasionally chains himself to his drawing table to spin out a mesmerizing Stevens woman or a captivating tale of adventure.

We met at my house recently on a rare break during the shooting of THE ROCKETEER movie — of which Dave is a co-producer — to catch up on his various ventures . . .

JEFF GELB: *We'll start by looking at some photos that the readers may never get to see.* (Laughter.) *But maybe we can whet their appetites by describing some of what has already been filmed. For example, the Bulldog Cafe — it's an actual working cafe?*

DAVE STEVENS: Well, yeah. For the practicalities of what we had to shoot, we literally built it inside and out *complete*, as an exterior and an interior, and everything had to work. It was fully decked out and functional.

JEFF: *Are they going to bring that to Disneyland or something so we can eat at the Bulldog Cafe?*

DAVE: Unfortunately the *skin* of the dog isn't . . . it's only temporary, you could put your fist through it. They'll probably have to rebuild it.

JEFF: *I'm looking now at pictures of the two stars of the film, Bill Campbell and Jennifer Connelly.*

DAVE: What a match!

JEFF: *Yeah! Well, tell me what you think, because you're the guy who envisioned these characters to begin with.*

DAVE: When I saw Bill's test I knew he

VITAL STATISTICS

Name: Dave Stevens
Born: 29 July 1955
Education: High school, Portland, OR; two years San Diego City College; miscellaneous art classes
First Professional Work: 1975, TARZAN comic strip inks over Russ Manning pencils
Credits: 1975: TARZAN comic strip; 1976: FEAR & LAUGHTER (Kitchen Sink); QUACK (Star*-Reach); 1977-80: miscellaneous inking and pinch-hitting; 1977-78: storyboards; 1978-81: animation work; 1975-82: film art; 1982-ongoing: ROCKETEER comic series; 1985-present: ROCKETEER film development; 1985-ongoing: miscellaneous cover art and illustrations
Favorite Movies: A PORTRAIT OF JENNIE (all-time favorite!), CITIZEN KANE, THIRD MAN, CASABLANCA, KING KONG, FIELD OF DREAMS, etc.
Favorite Fine Artists: N.C. Wyeth, Dean Cornwell, Gil Elvgren, J.C. Lyndecker, Robert McGinnis, Saul Tepper, John Lagatta, Sunbloom, George Petty, Alberto Vargas, Lawson Wood, Geo. Studdy, Mead Schaefer, Matt Clark, Edd Cartier, Harry Roundtree, Walter Baumhoffer, Geo. Rosen, Dalton Stevens, Sir William Russell Flint, etc.
Favorite Comics Artists: Frank Frazetta, Hal Foster, Roy Crane, Lou Fine, Reed Crandall, Maurice Whitman, Jim Steranko, Jack Kirby, Joe Kubert, Will Eisner, Wally Wood, Yves Chaland, Denis Sire, Mark Schultz, Franco Saudelli, A.H. Palacios, Vatine, etc.
Pet Peeves: Bad reproduction and color seps, and corporate lawyers

"Nobody was ready for an expensive comic-book

was the guy, I knew that's who Joe was going to pick. I was real happy.

JEFF: *This is kind of a silly question, but since you've patterned the Rocketeer after yourself —*

DAVE: Vaguely

JEFF: *— facially — was there ever any consideration that you would be in the film?*

DAVE: No, come on. *(Laughter.)*

JEFF: *Just curious.*

DAVE: No, never. *(Laughter.)*

JEFF: *This guy looks very much like what people would expect the Rocketeer to look like. And she looks great, dark haired, busty —*

DAVE: She's got great eyes.

JEFF: *Do you think she'll disappoint anyone who has read the comic?*

DAVE: No, not at all. If anything — *(Laughter.)* — she'll create a whole new legion of fans.

JEFF: *What's the feeling that you have looking at things that you envisioned being brought to life? More than anything you've done in films, this is* obviously *your vision. What's the feeling the first time you see something like the Bulldog Cafe?*

DAVE: Well, it's not easy to articulate because it happened over such a long period of time, because we started prep February 1990. It's just been such a slow, laborious process getting it to the point where we could shoot.

JEFF: *So the reality is that you saw everything coming together?*

DAVE: Yes, I was very much involved — since the beginning.

JEFF: *Let's go back to the beginning, then, because I don't know exactly why it's taken seven years to get this thing off the ground.*

DAVE: Neither do I! *(Laughter.)*

JEFF: *What's the genesis of the whole project?*

DAVE: Well, at the outset I had always *approached* the strip as if I were watching an old "B-movie" serial. That's what I was constantly striving for, was to put down a movie serial on paper, just something for an audience older than 15-year-old boys. I mean, I'm not going to exclude them, but I was writing it and drawing it for people my age and older.

JEFF: *Kind of more for people who had nostalgia for having watched serials when we were kids?*

DAVE: Yeah, because the kids today wouldn't know anything about it. One of the good things about this — one of the *great* things about it — is being able to bring this kind of flavor and genre to a generation that has *no* conception of what the 1930s were.

JEFF: *This is all set in what time period?*

DAVE: October, 1938, to be precise. *(Laughter.)*

JEFF: *Why October?*

DAVE: I don't know, the weather?

JEFF: *A good time of the year.*

DAVE: Not too hot. The film possibilities started around '83, I think.

JEFF: *Did you pursue it because of your own background in films?*

DAVE: Yeah. Well, it wasn't a conscious effort at that point, because I really didn't have a presentation put together, and I hadn't hooked up with anybody who really knocked me out. The first person to option the thing was **Steve Miner,** who I was working for at the time doing storyboards on another film, who did HOUSE and SOUL MAN; I think he directs WONDER YEARS now. Steve had wanted to do it from very early on, and also **Chuck Russell,** one of the guys who did DREAMSCAPE. There was interest from at least a half-dozen different production companies, all independents, and I went with Steve for a couple of years. We went up and down with treatments, different approaches, and never could really get a handle on it. So in '85 I let the option lapse and just got together with Danny and Paul, the guys who have been writing this since '85.

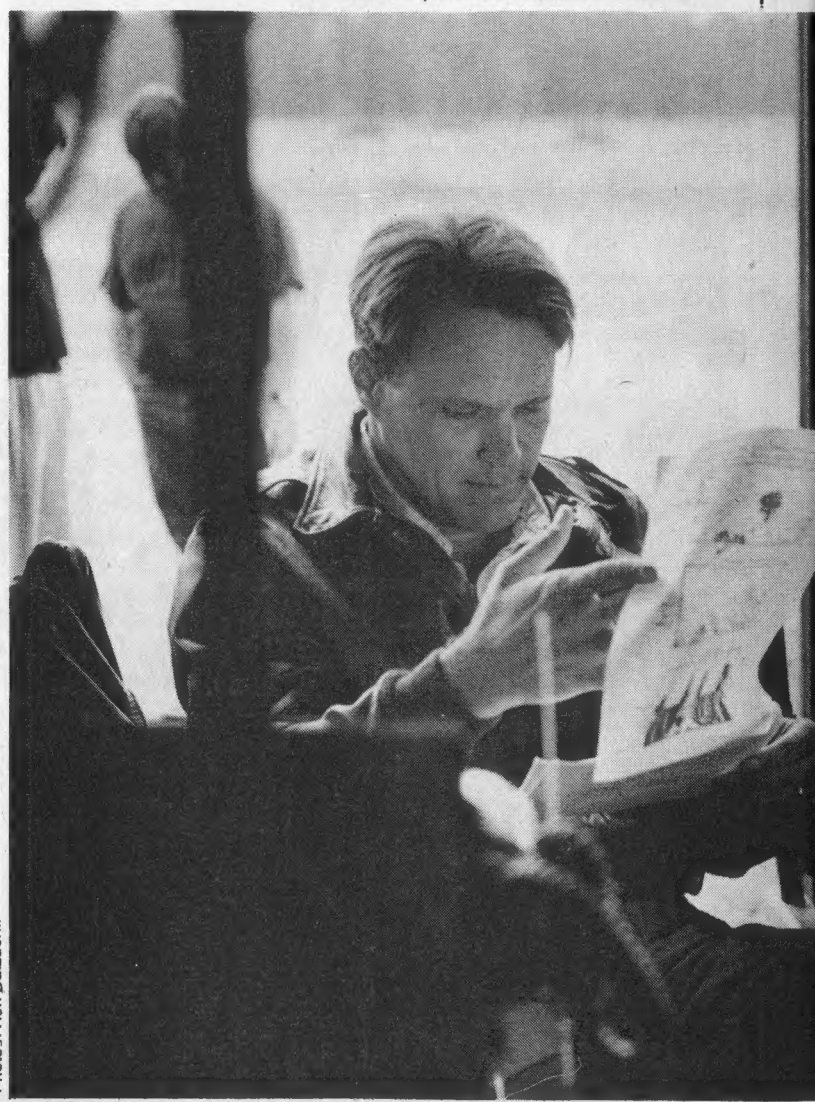
JEFF: *What was their background?*

DAVE: They were working at Empire.

JEFF: *Writing, producing, directing, what?*

DAVE: All three.

Director/artist Joe Johnston on the set . . .



Photos: Ron Batzdorff.

film. Disney was the only studio that didn't balk."

JEFF: *That's Danny Bilson and Paul DeMeo.*

DAVE: We had met through a mutual friend and hit it off immediately because I liked the stuff that they had shown me on tape. They had a real love for the period and the dialogue and the schmaltz, so we just decided then and there that we were going to do it together and try to pitch it as a *small* film, maybe in black-and-white — just do it for ourselves and see if anybody liked it. But very quickly we found ourselves kind of being swept off our feet by the Gordon Company. **Lloyd Levin,** who at that time was their bird dog and who is now a producer in his own right, had such a *vision* for this thing right off the bat, he said, "No, this has to be a *big* film."

JEFF: *What or who is the Gordon Company?*

DAVE: Largo — **Larry Gordon** and **Chuck Gordon;** they did DIEHARD and 48 HOURS and PREDATOR and *tons* of —

JEFF: *Is this Joel Silver's company?*

DAVE: Joel does things occasionally.

JEFF: *With them?*

DAVE: Yeah, in tandem. But it's a group that . . . basically, they kind of leave the creative people alone to do the best job.

JEFF: *How do you describe what they are; are they producers?*

DAVE: Executive producers.

JEFF: *So, was it Largo that actually sold this to Disney?*

DAVE: Being affixed to **Larry Gordon** got us to a lot of meetings that no way would we ever have gotten by ourselves. So we put together a presentation and started taking meetings, and very soon after that I met **Bill Dear,** who did HARRY AND THE HENDERSONS, and pretty soon he jumped in as director on it. Bill was another guy who just wanted to do it from day one, he was a big fan of the comic book.

JEFF: *What about Paul and Danny, were they comics fans?*

DAVE: Not *big* comics fans, but they had a little stash in their office. They were real selective, not really the collector types.

JEFF: *They knew your work?*

DAVE: Yeah, and that's why we got together, because they had been trying to chase me down for about a year. I found myself with two writers of my choice, a director of my choice, and a really powerful producer, so we were in real good shape. It was just that — at the time, '86 — nobody was ready for an expensive comic-book film, no studio was willing to bankroll something that big. We had a *lot* of interest, *everybody* thought it was a *great* idea. Disney was the only studio that didn't balk when we started talking budget.

JEFF: *What did you see the film being budgeted as? I mean, you said you started as a black-and-white small film, but after you actually got the idea that this could work on a bigger scale.*

DAVE: Originally 15 to 20 million dollars, but I don't know if that was really unrealistic of me, given all that we have found absolutely necessary to do to convey what was needed. The story is so rich, having to leave *any* of it out would have really cost us. So I'm glad we ended up where we did and were able to do what we've done, because we got just darn near *everything* in the story.

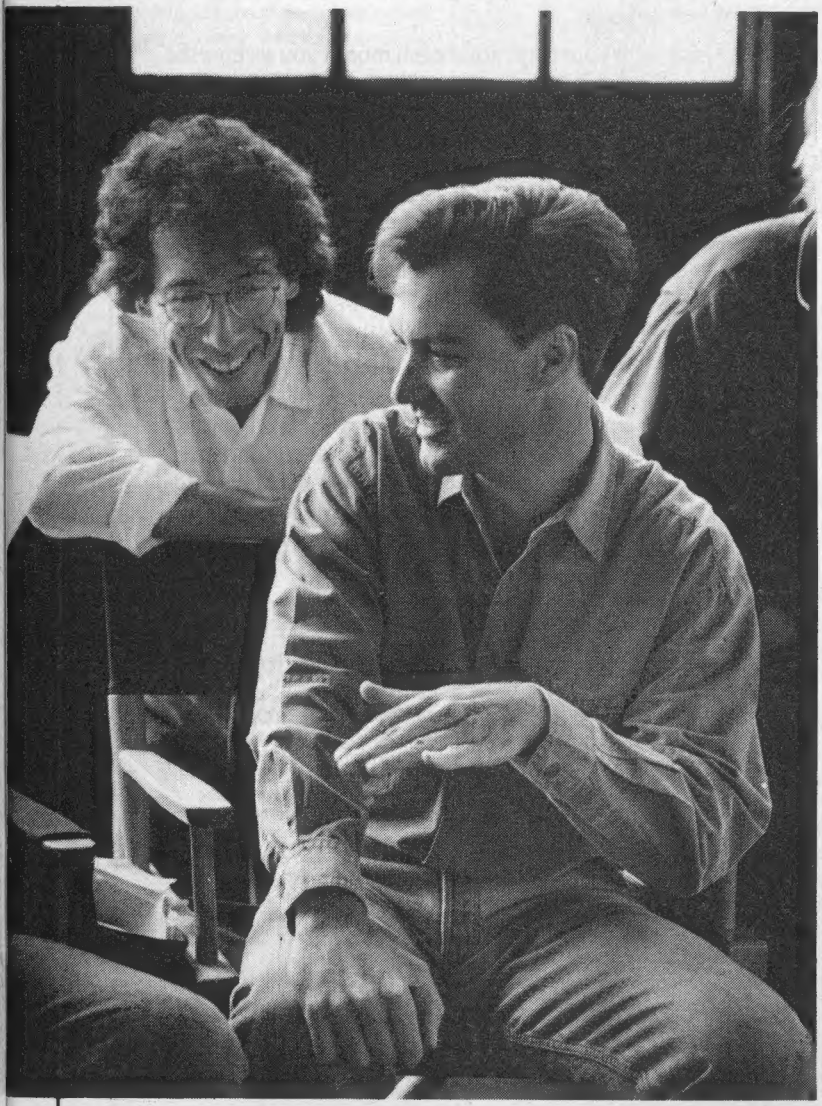
JEFF: *So, is this movie being made because of the success of BATMAN?*

DAVE: It was signed in '87, so it was ready to go maybe a year or two before. BATMAN, of course, helped to goose it along, *certainly.* I think BATMAN got us into production faster than we might have. But again, when we were at Disney there was a long period of tweaking the script and lots of things like that. That's just unavoidable; development is always *hellish* no matter where you are.

JEFF: *Did you come in with your own script? It started with your idea, then Danny and Paul — what actually are the screen credits?*

DAVE: It's Danny and Paul. I was a part of it, I was a contributor to the original draft, the first two drafts — but I don't get a story credit or anything like that.

. . . with ROCKETEER creator Dave Stevens.



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—**James M. Talbot**, Everett, MA

"Joe Johnston had been lobbying to work on it for a year."

JEFF: *How much of what you envisioned is still there?*
DAVE: Everything.
JEFF: *Wow.*
DAVE: I've never seen a film of this scope in this genre that has been as faithful in tone as this one has been to the original property, which is really *saying* something, especially coming from the creator.
JEFF: *Yeah, exactly.*
DAVE: I'm almost completely happy with it. There are very few things that I would pick at and say, "Well, if I'd had my druthers this wouldn't be this way."
JEFF: *What are the fans going to say? Are there going to be any points where they'll wish things hadn't been changed?*
DAVE: Well, yeah. I mean, I'm sure there will be this or that small thing, because *nobody's* always happy with everything.
JEFF: *But, for example, did they make any giant costume changes or anything like that?*
DAVE: No, and that was one thing that I was really happy with Joe about. He and **Jim Bissell** allowed me to generate the helmet, which was really a crucial part of the film. If it looks too unusual or too **buggy** the audience may laugh, and you're dead if that happens.
JEFF: *That's good. Well, what happened to the original director? Obviously, he's not attached to the project anymore.*
DAVE: Yeah. Unfortunately, after he finished HARRY AND THE HENDERSONS, Bill waited around with us while we were in development for easily a year and a half — it just got to the point where he *had* to take another film, he had other projects ready to go. He went into production on another one *thinking* that we would still be wallowing in development by the time he finished, and at that point Disney was ready to go, so it was really unfortunate all the way around. I would have loved to have seen Bill's interpretation of it. But **Joe Johnston** was one of these guys that had been lobbying to work on it for the last year or two previous, he wanted to do it pretty badly. He has a good feel for the period, he's a big fan of the 1930s look and style, he's a big aviation nut.
JEFF: *Great.*
DAVE: So, having to go with somebody else, I can't really think of anybody better prepared for it. I think we got real lucky.
JEFF: *Who's this attractive blonde here?* (Laughter.) *She's not in the film, is she?*
DAVE: Yeah, in a couple of different spots.
JEFF: *I'm still looking at photos here.* (Laughter.) *What does Joe bring to the production that will make it different from what Bill would have done?*

DAVE: Well, I don't know what he would bring to it that Bill might not have other than . . .
JEFF: *I'm not saying better, just different.*
DAVE: Well, certainly his own aesthetic taste, and also the savvy of someone who comes from Industrial Light and Magic as a background.
JEFF: *I was going to ask you, I couldn't remember before HONEY, I SHRUNK THE KIDS what Joe had done. Had he directed before?*
DAVE: Yeah, he did the EWOKS Movie — which I never saw, I think it was for television — and he directed second unit on ALWAYS, and I believe supervised all of the aerial stuff, which was *amazing.*
JEFF: *I'll say!*
DAVE: And it was all miniatures.
JEFF: *But you really can't tell.*
DAVE: No, it's seamless. He says you can spot this or that, but I bought it.
JEFF: *I did, too. So obviously there's one thing to your advantage already, because I'm assuming there's a fair amount of aerial stuff in this film. Is there?*
DAVE: Yeah, and it's amazing. The flying is spectacular, all of it.
JEFF: *Maybe you could give us a thumbnail sketch of what the story includes?*
DAVE: One of the most colorful things about it, at least the *beginning* of it, is that we put on a 1938 air show, an air circus, complete with at least a dozen old planes, about a half-dozen racing planes. You'll see and hear some of them going around a pylon, actually racing. The pilots did some *amazing* things.
JEFF: *Really knew their stuff?*
DAVE: Yeah, really going through their paces. A lot of plane-to-plane footage and no blue screen with the airplane stuff.
JEFF: *Thank goodness.*
DAVE: Yeah, it's all *really* happening, no miniatures. The only miniature stuff will be things that we just absolutely couldn't

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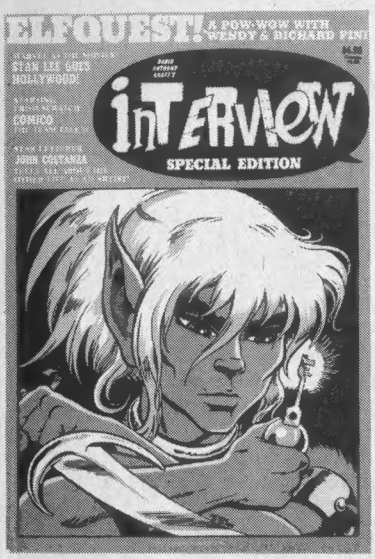
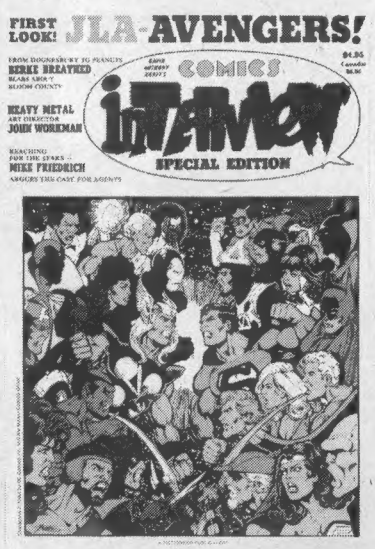


ELFQUEST. A pow-wow with the Pinis on Elfquest, the creation of an elfin world. John Costanza, letterer, tells all of being an artist. Stan Lee goes Hollywood, and the beginning of a legend now the Comico bunch, on their dreams and schemes for the future. Pini cover.

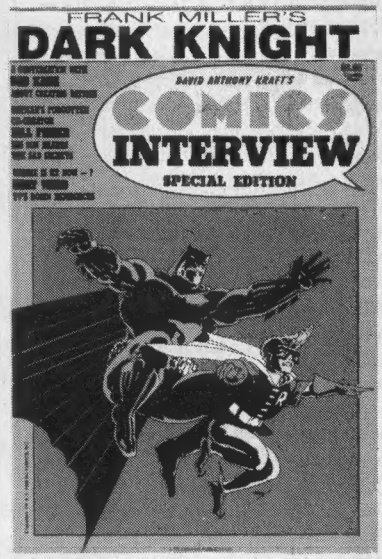


JLA-AVENGERS. George Perez and Roy Thomas tell all about a project that never saw print. Perez's never printed art, only available here! Also John Workman on Heavy Metal, Berke Breathed on Bloom County, Mike Friedrich on the biz end. Perez cover.

JUDGE DREDD VS BATMAN. Brian Bolland spills the beans on this project, first time round. Arn Saba saddles Neil the Horse. Don and Maggie Thompson give an inside view of the Comics Buyer's Guide. Bolland cover.

ROBOTECH. Carl Macek & Neil Vokes - from TV to comics - tell why Robotech's a hit. Phil Foglio - Hugo Award winning Sci-Fi artist mumbles about Myth-Adventures, and Cat Yronwode on art for art sake and comics for comics sake. More. Vokes & Rankin cover.

ELEKTRA. The evolution of Elektra. Frank Miller on ELEKTRA LIVES AGAIN and the DAREDEVIL graphic novel to come, "a huge, *expansive*, embroidered *origin* story, much like BATMAN: YEAR ONE." Bill Sienkiewicz on ELEKTRA: ASSASSIN. More. Sienkiewicz cover.



DARK KNIGHT. Frank Miller expounds on his magnum opus. Fred Finger, on his father, Bill. Bob Kane, on the last 50 yrs since Bat birth. Jerry Robinson, on past memories. Burt Ward on the trouble with tights, and George Roussos on the early days. Miller cover.

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"It has a roar of a jet—you know it's coming! *(Laughter.)*"

do. Luckily, all the air racing shots were do-able. They were *tough* but we could do them.

JEFF: *And what about the flying effects?*

DAVE: The Rocketeer himself?

JEFF: *Yeah. Will we believe a man can fly?*

DAVE: I do. *(Laughter.)* Believe me, when I first heard that ad campaign for SUPERMAN, you will believe a man can fly, I thought *great!* But when I saw it I didn't believe any of it. *(Laughter.)* I believed a man could be suspended by cables, you know, in front of a blue screen. But with this I think it's all going to be so tough to detect that the audience is really going to be happy.

JEFF: *Can you say what kind of methods were used to achieve that?*

DAVE: All kinds. We're doing a bit of everything to make this work. **Ken Ralston** and his staff are really knocking themselves out. What I've seen of the flying so far has been . . . it took my breath away, and I'm a pretty harsh critic.

JEFF: *Well, let's put it this way, in this film because he doesn't have any other super powers, if the flying doesn't work the film doesn't work.*

DAVE: Right.

JEFF: *So it really does have to be right. Didn't you say that the rocket packs shoot real flame?*

DAVE: Yeah. I don't know how the effects guys rigged it up, because technically it's not compatible to use electricity *and* fuel, but they got the combination of the two and it kicks out a double-barrel jet flame. And it has the roar of a jet — you know it's coming! *(Laughter.)* You duck and run!

JEFF: *I'm looking at a picture of the Rocketeer from the back where you can see his jet pack.*

DAVE: That's the first lift-off where he goes to save Malcolm.

JEFF: *This is kind of a silly statement, but wouldn't this burn his pants?*

DAVE: That's what these plates are for right here, these two plates.

JEFF: *It's like an exhaust thing?*

DAVE: Yeah. There's another shot of the pack back here someplace . . . you can tilt them to either deflect the flame extremely or just straight out. It does protect his seat completely, otherwise the stunt guy would always have burned britches.

JEFF: *When you designed the comic you didn't have to worry about stuff like that.*

DAVE: I gave it a thought, that's why I had two little booster things that came out of the top at angles and all that came out of the bottom was exhaust. But *this* they both come straight out of the bottom.

JEFF: *I would assume — it's not that this is actually aerodynamic — but I assume it really has some kick behind it if you're in it.*

DAVE: *(Laughter.)* It's interesting to watch.

JEFF: *It seems like it could push you across the floor, anyway.*

DAVE: Well —

JEFF: *Have you got in this costume?*

DAVE: No.

JEFF: *No!*

DAVE: Well, **Bill Campbell** is six foot three.

JEFF: *You must have photos of yourself with the backpack or the mask on?*

DAVE: No.

JEFF: *David!* (Laughter.)

DAVE: I've been too busy to be clowning around with this stuff.

JEFF: *Okay,* this *picture proves to me that I will see Dave Stevens in this movie.*

DAVE: *(Laughter.)* If you blink, you'll miss it.

JEFF: *Or if it ends up on the cutting room floor.*

DAVE: Yeah. I get to shake hands with the Devil and die. *(Laughter.)*

JEFF: *I love it. Watch out for Davie, folks, he is there. He does his Stan Lee number in this.* (Laughter.) *Well, the photos make me feel like anyone who has read the comic-book series is going to enjoy the movie. I don't see anything here that suggests that you guys have not gone all out. Were any of these existing buildings — or was this all built?*

DAVE: It was all built. The point was to build it and age it only slightly so that it looked like it had been built maybe ten years prior.

JEFF: *Are they keeping the buildings up in case they want to use these again?*

DAVE: So far, but I don't know what's

"I was afraid, after BATMAN, that there

going to happen to the cafe or any of the hangars.

JEFF: *Is the assumption that this could turn into a series if it plays out right?*

DAVE: It was originally bought as a trilogy.

JEFF: *So they have the option, anyway.*

DAVE: Yeah, so we'll see. Did you look at this one?

JEFF: *Yeah, that's gorgeous. What is that?*

DAVE: This is the interior of **Howard Hughes'** office, and this is the interior of the Southseas Club.

JEFF: *Beautiful.*

DAVE: It's enormous, cavernous.

JEFF: *How much of this stuff did you design for the film? I'm not even sure to what extent you worked on the film.*

DAVE: In a producing capacity, co-producer.

JEFF: *Would you have visually designed any of this stuff?*

DAVE: I worked on the rocket pack and got to physically design the helmet.

JEFF: *What about stuff like this?*

DAVE: The sets were pretty well taken care of by **Bissell** and his art director, and done to such a degree that I never could have. I don't understand blueprints at all, I would be totally lost.

JEFF: *But did they work from your comics to create these sets?*

DAVE: Yeah, they had panels blown up and on the walls.

JEFF: *I don't remember this in the comics.*

DAVE: No, **Howard Hughes** is not in the comics, we wrote these scenes for the film. But the Southseas is sort of based on a nightclub from the comic.

JEFF: *Is the movie's story actually a*

the ROCKETEER
USING THE STOLEN ROCKET-PACK FOR THE FIRST TIME, RACING PILOT, CLIFF SECORD HAS TAKEN TO THE SKIES -- IN A DESPERATE BID TO SAVE THE LIFE OF A FELLOW FLYER... OR DIE TRYING!
chapter 2
WHEEOOW!! IT WORKS--I'M FLYIN'!!
PEEV WAS RIGHT...THIS HELMET'S FIN IS A PERFECT RUDDER!
HANG ON, MALCOLM HERE I COME!

would be a rash of *cheap* comic-book movies."

story from the comics?

DAVE: It's a conglomeration of everything that was in the comic books, plus a dash of this and a dash of that that I wasn't able to put in the comics. I always had a lot of extra notes or extra scenes that just got culled, so I was able to bring some of that back in and put it into this. And then Danny and Paul brought *their* ideas in, which were terrific. So we ended up with a story that's *basically* the same adventure but it's *bigger,* and the characters are much more thought out — obviously they would have to be.

JEFF: *Right. Is this essentially his origin story and then where it goes from there?*

DAVE: Yeah, yeah. This is his baptism of fire, this is the one.

JEFF: *If people were to think of it in reference to the comics would they say, "This is PACIFIC PRESENTS #1"?*

DAVE: *(Laughter.)* They would just have to recognize this as the *best* of the body of work that is existing in print, plus whatever else we felt appropriate to add to it. It's taking what was very *lean* in the comics and just really fleshing it out and giving it all that it really needed to be a better, more rounded story.

JEFF: *Now that Danny and Paul are so much better known because of their work on THE FLASH TV series it seems like a natural marriage, but back then, in '85, you were really taking a chance on them, too. It's not like they had already made a name for themselves.*

DAVE: Yeah, but I didn't feel like it was all that big a risk, because we were so in sync as far as our attitude toward the property and how we wanted to handle it. You know, I met with them several times before we really got going on it, and we really felt each other out. But I wasn't all that wary, I really fell in with them right away.

JEFF: *I remember you saying to me a year or two ago that you were very leery of the CAPTAIN AMERICA film and how it might affect yours — it must have been before you went into production.*

DAVE: It might have been, yeah. I don't remember what the conversation was about, but I think more than anything that I was afraid after BATMAN that there would be a rash of really quick *cheap* comic-book movies that would really soften the market for the really good ones.

JEFF: *And there has not been.*

DAVE: No, amazingly.

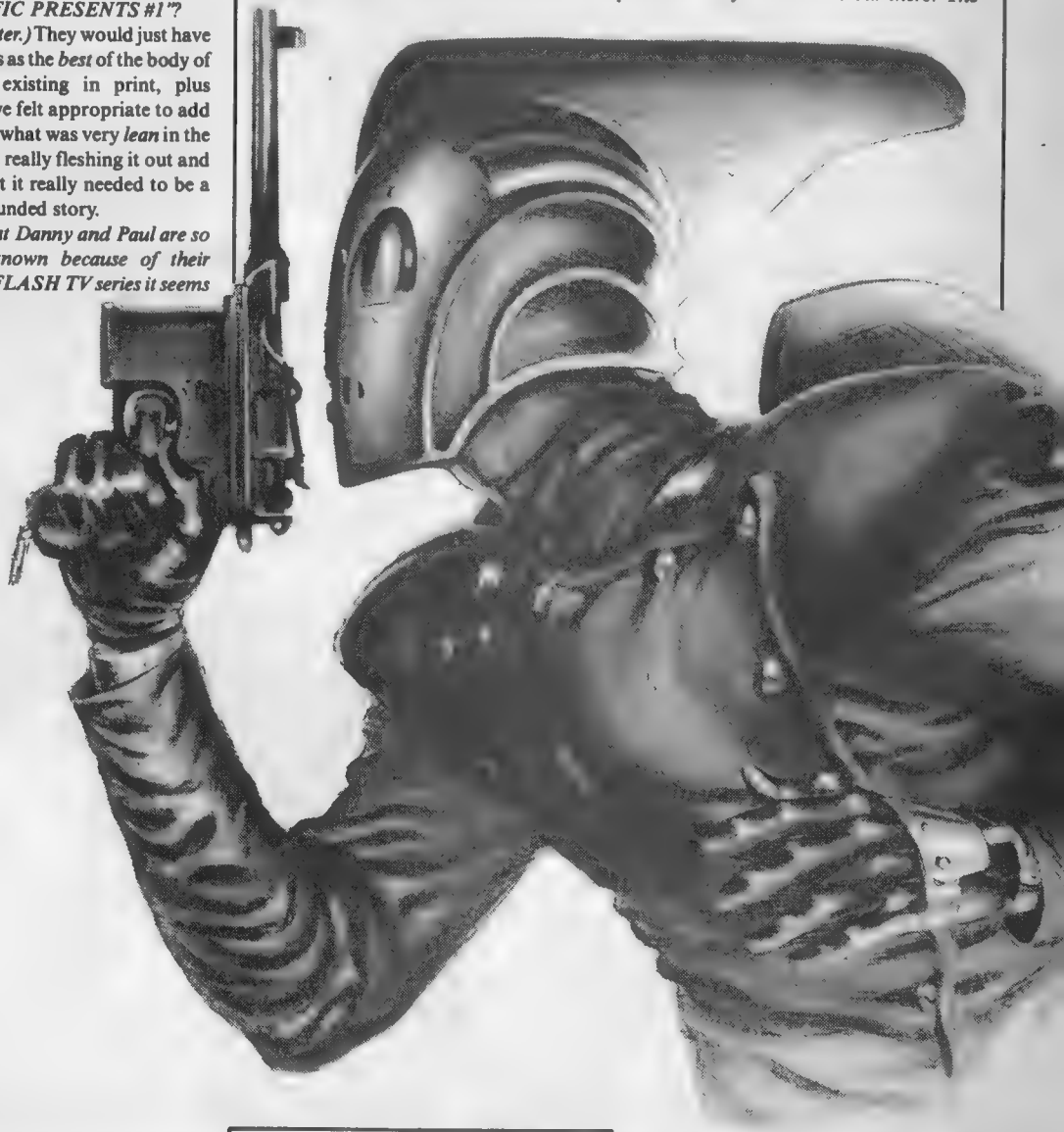
JEFF: *That's strange. The only thing I can think of is two-fold: (1) to do it right they're never going to be cheap; and (2) if you do them wrong, they're already done wrong on TV all of the time.*

DAVE: Yeah, exactly.

JEFF: *Although THE FLASH is not done wrong, and it's not cheap. But generally speaking the TV stuff has never been good.*

DAVE: No.

JEFF: *So you did luck out there. The*



Actor Bill Campbell bears a remarkable resemblance to Rocketeer Cliff Secord — not to mention artist Dave Stevens. Here and throughout interview — advance shots from Disney's THE ROCKETEER movie.

"I was doing presentation art for a lot of small films."

CAPTAIN AMERICA film, who knows what even happened to it?

DAVE: Never released, un-releasable.

JEFF: *Did you ever see it?*

DAVE: No.

JEFF: *You've been working in films yourself for how long now?*

DAVE: Off and on since about '74 or '75. I was doing stuff for **Paul Bartell,** developments.

JEFF: *I don't remember that. Oh, wait a minute, I do remember that — FRANKENCAR!* (Laughter.)

DAVE: Yeah, that was one of them! *(Laughter.)* A lot of development art and presentation art for a lot of small films that either never got made or were so embarrassingly bad that I wouldn't even want to mention them.

JEFF: *Is it okay that I mention FRANKENCAR?*

DAVE: Yeah, because that never happened. It was a lot of fun, just the idea and the fact that it was **Paul Bartell.** He's got such a wild sensibility.

JEFF: *Yeah. I remember your artwork for that, it was a guy on top of a car, basically they were melded together.* (Laughter.) *I think they used it for a VARIETY ad to get some financing.*

DAVE: Yeah, but he did something else instead, that one never happened — which may be for the better. *(Laughter.)*

JEFF: *At what point did you segue into making films the way that you make your living, or being involved in the film industry?*

DAVE: Well, I've kind of been flirting with it, I haven't ever plunged in until now with both feet. I never was as involved with a film, other than maybe RAIDERS —

JEFF: *The original RAIDERS?*

DAVE: Yeah.

JEFF: *Which you did what for?*

DAVE: Storyboards.

JEFF: *Didn't Steranko do some storyboards for that?*

DAVE: No, he did some presentation art. **Ed Verreaux** was the chief storyboard guy. I believe he's doing HONEY, part two.

JEFF: *HONEY?*

DAVE: HONEY, I BLEW UP THE BABY or whatever they're calling it. *(Laughter.)*

JEFF: *How did these guys hear about you?*

DAVE: I'm not sure. A lot of the jobs that I was getting at that point were always being referred from some friend of a friend or somebody I'd met somehow.

JEFF: *Did you know a lot of people that did storyboards?*

DAVE: No, I just knew a lot of people in the film industry. At this point it's hard for me to recall where I was meeting them or how I was meeting them, but I would find myself in the company of these people really often. I first met **Landis** in '75 or '76 while I was working with **Paul Bartell.** I kind of found myself with a nice little list of potential clients

BUT CLIFF MISJUDGES HIS SPEED.
YIPE!!
WHUUFF!!
19
GOTTA TRY TA TURN AROUND-- --UP...'
NO! GOTTA CUT THE JETS-- I'M COMIN' UP TOO FA--
ON THE GROUND, THE CROWD STARES, IN BUG-EYED DISBELIEF!!
SKRAAK
IS 'DIS REALLY HAPPENIN'??
OMIGOD! HE'S SMACKED RIGHT INTO THE WING.!!

"I only did boards on RAIDERS for a month or two."

and never really had a lack of work. I mean, I always had the opportunity to work in film if I *wanted* it, I just skirted it and held it off for a long time and only dipped in when I needed it for the money.

JEFF: *It's kind of humorous, to think of you doing storyboards because, because . . . well . . .*

DAVE: *(Laughter.)* Why?

JEFF: *Don't storyboards have to be done relatively quickly?*

DAVE: Yeah, but believe me, they were, it was pretty ugly stuff. I would *pump* 'em, put the halftones in them and all that. When I did them for **Spielberg** — and I only did boards on RAIDERS for a month or two — he wanted them fully rendered and toned and inked and everything, he wanted like a coffee table book from the storyboards; after I left, **Ed Verreaux** and two other guys, maybe three, finished up the work. It was *massive.*

JEFF: *How much of the film would you say you storyboarded?*

DAVE: In the *existing* film very little, there's maybe a few little snippets of what I did. Most of the sequences that I boarded were cut out because of budget. They had a budget meeting at one point when I was still there and suddenly that stuff was gone.

JEFF: *What's a scene that we'll never see that you worked on?*

DAVE: Oh, there was a sequence where he was in a museum and there were hundreds of glass cases with artifacts and he had to find the one that contained the piece that he wanted for the staff, and it was basically how he gets it, what he has to go through. He has to fight a ninja or a samurai, then this big fat guy with a machine gun, then rolls a giant gong and smashes the window, goes through the window and runs down the roof and jumps into an open car, takes off. They used pieces of it in the title sequence of the second film.

JEFF: *What happens to these storyboards? Do they become the property of the film company?*

DAVE: Yeah, they get locked into a vault and you never see them again.

JEFF: *I'd be curious to see some of that, I can't even imagine your work in that kind of state. I can't imagine your work being looser and less structured.*

DAVE: Well, it was. It was basically comp art, markers and gray tones and things. It didn't have that tickled ink line — it *obviously* wasn't done with a brush, just very quickly done. It was just comprehensive drawing.

JEFF: *What other films have you done storyboards for?*

DAVE: Mostly things that never got made or never got released. A lot of the boards that I would do would be strictly to help sell the film, or to get it into development. They would bring me in to visualize things that they thought would sell it, and in some cases maybe it would do the trick but somewhere down the line the film didn't actually get made. One of them was a version of GODZILLA that **Steve Miner** was going to do in '84.

JEFF: *I remember that one, didn't Bill Stout do some work on that as well?*

DAVE: He did a poster for it, and he did some of the boards also. So did **Doug Wildey.** The model for Godzilla was

TAMALE
ICE CREAM

"Film is so much more satisfying, because the people

amazing, it was a really *terrifying* dinosaur.

JEFF: *But that didn't get too far.*

DAVE: Actually, it did, it got quite a ways before it got snipped. It's a shame because the following year GODZILLA '85 came out.

JEFF: *And you worked on THRILLER, the Michael Jackson video.*

DAVE: Yeah, and Michael kept those boards.

JEFF: *Did he know your work?*

DAVE: No. John brought me in because he wanted to make sure that Michael understood what he was visually trying to do, so I spelled out every scene. Michael liked it enough that he brought me back to the Victory Tour, to do the designing of the city that rises up out of the stage, the sword in the stone business that they did. I, unfortunately, never got to see the tour, so I don't know how the stuff looked.

JEFF: *That's wild.*

DAVE: Yeah, because they never made a video out of it, and that was the original idea, to make a video from it.

JEFF: *What was he like to work with?*

DAVE: Great, I had a ball. It was real fun, there was a lot of camaraderie. Not at all what you would expect; he wasn't flipped out or weird, he was real normal.

JEFF: *It's funny you would say that because I met him once briefly and he absolutely had his act together, he was not spacey or anything else.*

DAVE: Yeah, a very everyday guy. Most people just expect, from all of the things that they read and see in the tabloids, this kind of **Howard Hughes**-type guy.

JEFF: *And he's really not.*

DAVE: That's just the image he's cultivated. He *likes* the image, but privately he's a different kind of person.

JEFF: *So, would you say that the ROCKETEER film has essentially been your living for the last couple of years?*

DAVE: Yeah, I've given it all of my time, just about. I've given it a *major* portion of my time since about '86, that's why you haven't seen very much from me. What little art I've done for the last three or four years has been primarily either film art or advertising art, just to pay the bills.

JEFF: *What have I not seen? I saw a couple of comic covers, but what beyond that?*

DAVE: A smattering of those. I worked on a Wheaties campaign involving **Michael Jordon.**

JEFF: *This was something on a cereal box?*

DAVE: Well, it was never clear to me. They had me do three full-page comic-book story type situations of **Michael Jordon** growing up and then going through school and stuff, all fully-colored camera-ready art, and I never saw it in print. I never even got tear sheets of the stuff. I know it was used but I never saw what format.

JEFF: *And where else would I have seen you?*

DAVE: Man, I don't know. *(Laughter.)* It's hard for me to think because so much of my mental time has been taken up on

ROCKETEER. I think I'm generally thought of as "the lazy man of comics" because you never see me do anything and yet I'm *supposed* to be working on something. Believe it or not, a lot of the time has been taken jamming on the script.

JEFF: *I think that's good for people to know who have been trying to follow your work and they just haven't found it.*

DAVE: Yeah, draft after draft, trying to get it to the point where they like it. That involved a hell of a lot of hours and a lot of meetings. And I've done some things for Danny and Paul.

JEFF: *Come to think of it, didn't you get credit for redesigning Flash's costume?*

DAVE: Oh, well, all I did was put a spin on the old **Carmine Infantino** version of the suit. I had done two or three other versions that were mine that I liked a lot *more.*

JEFF: *Did they still resemble the actual comic costume?*

DAVE: Only the cowl. My difference from the state of the art Flash was that I did these lightning cuts on the cheek and then *over* the nose to a point, like we ended up with in the film, which I was happy about. But the body suit was totally different, it was a lot more rakish in the cut, and very stylized. And it had a nice . . . it *looked* like something in motion. And Danny felt that they wanted to stay closer to the purist version of the Flash, which I'm sure they were right in doing because it would have upset too many fans. Every time you monkey with a suit they get mad. So we just went back to the original and I said, "Okay, but I've got to get rid of these yellow go-go boots." *(Laughter.)* That's deadly, that's laughable, so we got rid of those. And I did some things with the lightning bolts, and that was basically it.

JEFF: *Is it true that up until that point the networks were not interested in seeing him as a costumed character?*

DAVE: Yeah, and I think a lot of it had to do with the visuals that they were using. DC generated some things and they were using maybe blowups from the comics, and they wanted to see a more realistic rendering of that suit, how it would *really* look on a human rather than just on a cutout. I think that's what helped them over the hump, was that I did a drawing that really looked like a person rather than an overblown muscular comic guy, even though they ended up with really *awfully heavy* musculature. When I first sw the suit when they were shooting tests on it, **Bob Short,** the guy who did the suit, I talked to him about the muscu-

come to life. In the comic, they only exist in your head."

Here and previous page, more work from the Dark Horse ROCKETEER.

lature, primarily the lats and the neck and things like that, and I said, "Please, you've got to tone this down, he looks like he's got a turtle shell on his back." *(Laughter.)* Really, so overblown that it looked like Arnold flexing all the time, and they finally did tone it down. They weren't able to for the pilot, but after that they went back and pulled some of it in to where it was a little closer to reality — but still it's too bulky for my liking. That's not a runner.

JEFF: *That's exactly what I was going to say. The irony is here's a show about the fastest runner in the world —*

DAVE: — and he looks like he would plod.

JEFF: *Yeah. It doesn't look like he could run very far at all in that; it doesn't look like the way your muscles end up looking when you run.*

DAVE: But again, they wanted him to look powerful, to look like he could dish it out. And I don't have that much of a problem with it other than in my own aesthetic, which says tone it down a little more and stylize it.

JEFF: *I'm with you, although generally speaking it seems to have worked out okay.*

DAVE: M-hm.

JEFF: *So, for people who are still wondering whether you are going to do comic books —*

DAVE: *(Laughter.)* Unfortunately my direction, even in the very beginning of THE ROCKETEER, was only to do THE ROCKETEER, a very finite number of issues, and then go. Depart! I'll *always* do covers because I really enjoy doing them, the variety is what really makes it interesting for me, being able to do *any* subject matter I want. But to be tied to a series of any kind, even if it's only limited, just doesn't have any appeal. I'm not the kind of person who has the attention span or the commitment that it takes to stick it out on a series, and I knew this going in. I had pretty much written off comics as a livelihood around '76 or so because I did a stint briefly with **Russ Manning** on TARZAN. I knew after doing that for a year that I never could make a go of it as a livelihood, so I didn't have any false aspirations or false assumptions about what it would be like. THE ROCKETEER was initially done as two chapters for my own jollies. Unfortunately, it went over well and I had to do *more* of them.

JEFF: *Unfortunately.*

DAVE: Well, only unfortunately in that I was not prepared to do any more. I found myself in a real teeth-gritting position, I had to sit down and grit my way through it. Even though I *love* coming up with the ideas and the characters and the concepts and all that — that is *totally* fun — the daily drudge of drawing panel after panel —

JEFF: *It's kind of like the famous Hitchcock quote about he loved all the work preparing to make the movie, but he would rather someone else direct it.*

DAVE: *(Laughter.)* Yeah, it's just so laborious, film more so than comics. But for me film is so much more satisfying because the people come to life. In the comic they come to life in your head, you read them as *you* see them. But in a film they're real because actors are playing them, and you get to construct a *world* around these characters as you see it, in three dimensions and big and you can do whatever you want with it.

JEFF: *Yeah.*

DAVE: Within budgetary restrictions, of course. It's a real temptation to go back and do a comic here and there just to be able to put down the ideas on paper; do it as a one-shot. I may do that at some point.

JEFF: *I would imagine that in these times of the $25 coffee-table comic that people have already come to you and said, "What do you want to do?"*

DAVE: No, nobody has. I think they're too scared. *(Laughter.)* That they'd never get it.

JEFF: *Yeah.* (Laughter.) *You're going to have to go to someone else.*

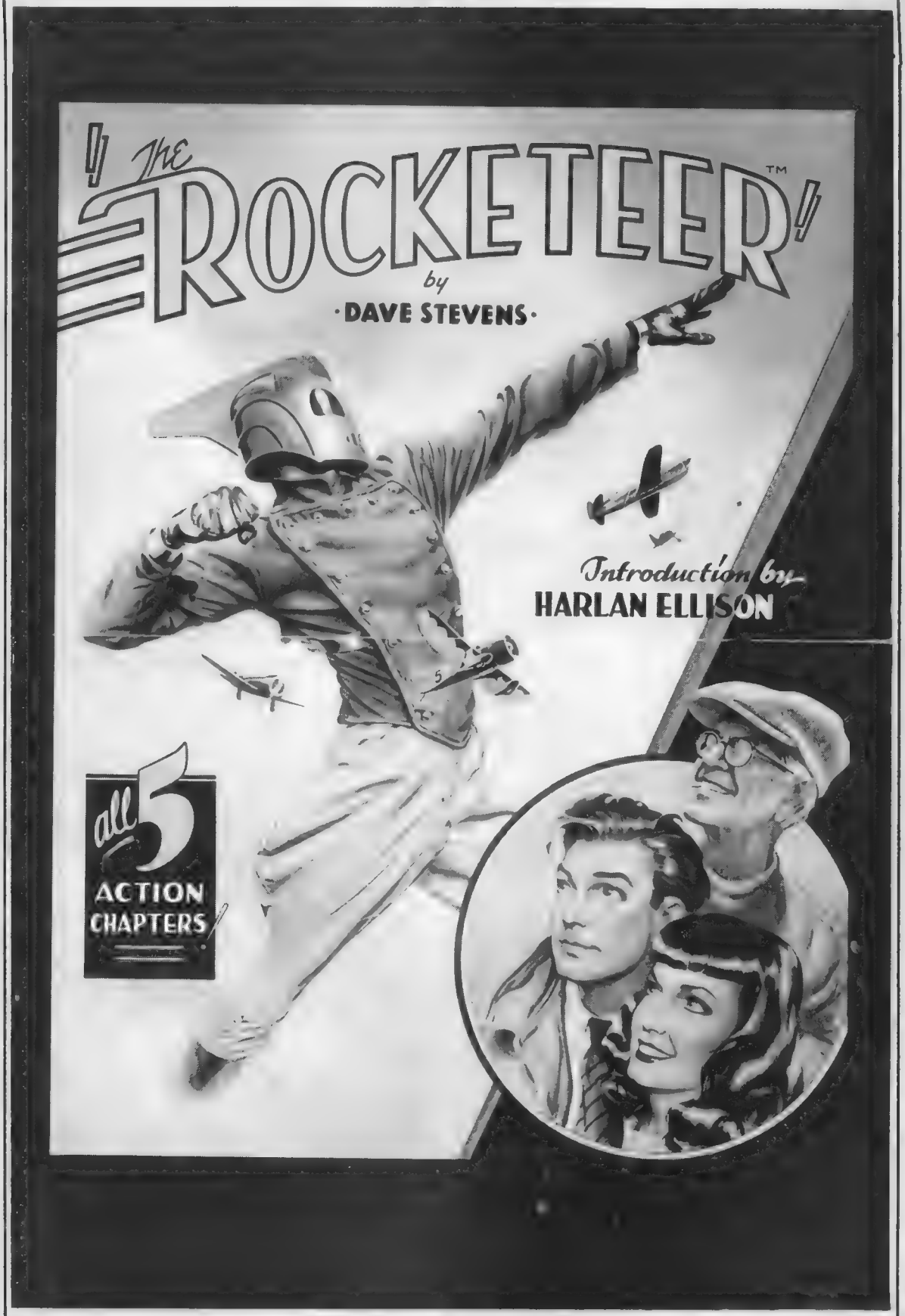
DAVE: Which I knew going in I would. I already have a property that I am still deciding whether to do first as a book or pitch it as a film. It depends on when I'm cut loose on this, because I've got basically every hour of every day spoken for, for the next six months. And we're done, we just wrapped principal shooting last week, and now it's all effects. So really my time is not all that bad on this film, but now there's the merchandising, the marketing, the advertising, all that stuff.

JEFF: *Are you going to do any of the artwork for the posters or anything?*

DAVE: I don't know, that's something that's still undecided. I don't think so at this point. My one great fear was that they were going to do another DICK TRACY campaign, the kind of pop art approach with a real clunky, heavy comic-book look, which I thought was *deadly* ugly.

JEFF: *I understand why they did it for that, it was a four-color Sunday comics-type thing.*

DAVE: Sure, but the only way that could have worked was if they could have


THE ROCKETEER™
by
·DAVE STEVENS·
Introduction by
HARLAN ELLISON
all 5
ACTION CHAPTERS!

On ROCKETEER: "I am going to write it. I've written

shown Tracy's face. They were prohibited from showing his face — so the whole campaign was negated.

JEFF: *What? Why couldn't they show his face?*

DAVE: I don't know, maybe they didn't want to because it wasn't the classic Tracy face, it was **Warren Beatty's** face. But I don't know what made them make that decision. It really destroyed the idea of the comic strip.

JEFF: *Well, I do have good news for people who may think you're never doing another adventure of the Rocketeer, I'm actually looking at the originals for another adventure — lucky me! Will this see the light of day at some point?*

DAVE: Yeah, this issue is coming out concurrently with the film, I believe. It's being done by Dark Horse. **Kaluta** laid this one out, thumbnailed it, and **Art Adams** helped me with the pencils — as you go through it you'll be able to spot some of the pages he worked on.

JEFF: *This could not be nicer, this is a real treat for me. It's nice to know that there's still one coming. Is Disney going to do its own adaptation of the movie?*

DAVE: Which I've been involved in a lot.

Bob Foster, who is editing the thing at my request, brought in one of my first choices, **Russ Heath.**

JEFF: *All right!*

DAVE: He's pencilling it *and* inking it, and he's doing some *amazing* work on it.

JEFF: *That doesn't surprise me at all, I'm a huge fan of Russ; and I see him as being very sympatico to your style.*

DAVE: Yeah, we get along real well.

JEFF: *I see characters in here in your new story that I recognize from the film.* (Laughter.)

DAVE: Yep. This was a real fun issue, it was probably the best time I've had working on the comic, and that's saying a lot.

JEFF: *Because of the collaborators you chose to work with?*

DAVE: Yeah, yeah. I needed a little bit of input visually from some other direction and **Kaluta** helped open me up visually to lay pages out in a better fashion — they hang together better.

JEFF: *It's very nice work and I guess the only question that I would answer for fans is that although I can spot the influences of the people you're mentioning, it certainly still looks like Dave Stevens art.*

DAVE: Yeah, because as I go through it — I'm inking it — it always ends up looking like me. There are a few things that people are going to look at and say, "Gee, I think that's Art." It was so *right* sometimes I would just ink them verbatim without changing anything.

Here and next page: Material from Dave Stevens' personal sketchbook.

one more, and there are plans for a graphic novel."

JEFF: *Beyond this issue, though, it sounds to me like you're not going to return to THE ROCKETEER.*

DAVE: I am going to keep writing it, I've written one more and there are plans for a graphic novel.

JEFF: *Your $25 coffee-table book?*

DAVE: *(Laughter.)* No, the $25 coffee-table book is something completely unrelated, that's the thing that I'm playing around with pitching first or doing as a book. I'm a little too anxious, I want to go ahead and pitch it now, I want to do the book maybe a little later. But we'll see.

JEFF: *Here's the question that I actually asked in COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE, I don't know if you saw it —*

DAVE: Who did you ask it of — me? An open letter to **Dave Stevens,** the laziest man in comics! *(Laughter.)*

JEFF: *When is somebody going to do a coffee-table book of your comic-book covers?*

DAVE: Oh, we're planning one to come out early summer.

JEFF: *Really?*

DAVE: Ursis Imprints, they've done some really nice coffee-table books. They're doing basically a pullout poster book, very affordable, maybe 15 or 20 pages — not very heavy.

JEFF: *How many covers would you say you've done at this point?*

DAVE: A lot.

JEFF: *More than 20?*

DAVE: Yeah, definitely. I hadn't realized how many I'd done until somebody compiled a computer checklist of everything; it took up three pages.

JEFF: *Covers?*

DAVE: Everything. I was pretty shocked.

JEFF: *Has any of your Russ Manning stuff ever been reprinted?*

DAVE: I really wouldn't want to see it. *(Laughter.)* For Russ's part it was beautiful, but I was pretty untrained at the time.

JEFF: *Do you feel like he helped train you?*

DAVE: Oh, yeah, in some very practical ways.

JEFF: *I am not seeing Betty in this issue so far, am I crazy?*

DAVE: No, because he's still out east. This is the wrap-up story that gets him finished with that leg of his adventure, then he comes back to L.A.

JEFF: *Great stuff, really nice stuff.*

DAVE: Well, I got to play around with his back story.

JEFF: *This is a long issue.*

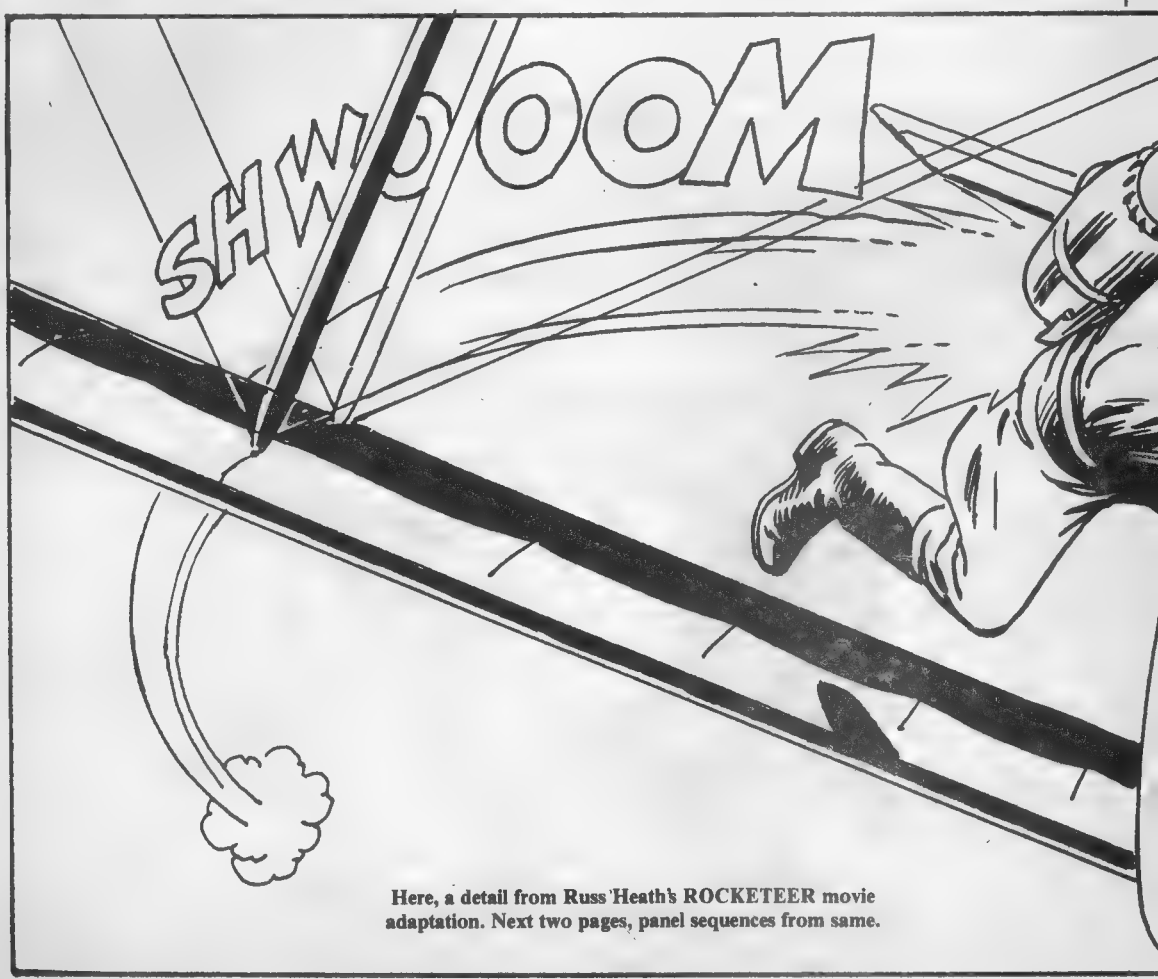
DAVE: It's *very* long, about 25 pages.

JEFF: *This is great. Is this an homage to Shirley Temple?*

DAVE: *(Laughter.)* Sort of.

"I think they wanted to release it under the Disney banner,

JEFF: *Among other people?*
DAVE: *(Laughter.)* Yeah.
JEFF: *Good stuff, very nice.*
DAVE: Well, you know, I like placing him in a specific world. The cinema world of the '30s in *my* mind goes hand-in-hand with the pulp world, with the media world, etc. It's all connected, you know; the American myth, to me, *is* the 1930s.
JEFF: *They did some of that in the film as well, right?*
DAVE: Yeah.
JEFF: *Howard Hughes — what other characters are in the film?*
DAVE: Well, I don't want to give them away. It's just weaving Cliff into old Hollywood, famous figures in world events at the time and in the film world, and the fantasy world. That combination to *me* really is what it takes to make a new character *work* back then, is if you totally integrate him with the milieu — if you want to use that word.
JEFF: *I get the sense from looking at the few stills here that maybe this is in the same genre as in the INDIANA JONES series.*
DAVE: In some ways I guess it is, but in the ways that I enjoy it more — it's truer to its roots. It all takes place here; he's an L.A. boy and he stays here the whole time, he doesn't go anywhere else. It's not the globetrotting thing where you kind of lose track of what time period it takes place in.
JEFF: *So, it isn't essentially a serial in that way?*
DAVE: Not in *that* way, but it is in every *other* way. There are constant cliff-hangers, things you think he's not going to make it through, but it's very firmly placed in history, you know *exactly* what time and place it's happening in. In the INDIANA JONES films I had a problem retaining that.
JEFF: *Right, that's true. Well, when you say October of '38, I know you know* exactly *when it's placed.* (Laughter.)
DAVE: Exactly.
JEFF: *A question we have to answer here — people will maybe have seen Jennifer Connelly by this time, but there may be some question as to who she's playing in the film.* (Laughter.) *Is she still Betty?*
DAVE: Well, Betty in the comic book basically *only* exists in the comic book. Disney *legally* didn't feel good about bringing that character to the screen. So, Jennifer still plays Cliff's girl friend, and she's an aspiring actress, and she's *gorgeous,* and it's very appropriate in *all* ways. It's not anything that I felt compromised about, so in that respect I'm not at all disappointed.
JEFF: *She's no less attractive, let's put it that way.*
DAVE: Yes, it's just that the image is slightly different.
JEFF: *And I don't think that's a big surprise to anybody who understands that the legalities have to be adhered to. A few more questions about the film — what rating are you guys trying for?*



Here, a detail from Russ Heath's ROCKETEER movie adaptation. Next two pages, panel sequences from same.

rather than Touchstone, to identify it as a family picture."

DAVE: PG. I would *rather* go PG-13 only because I don't want to have to fear losing some of the gunplay and the scary stuff. I mean there's no gore at all, by any means.

JEFF: *Which is a good thing for you.*

DAVE: *(Laughter.)* Yeah. Now, who does this one look like?

JEFF: *This is Art Adams.*

DAVE: Yeah, definitely.

JEFF: *And nicely so, too. So, it's a PG which means I can bring my seven-year-old.*

DAVE: Definitely. There's *nothing* in this that will give anyone nightmares.

JEFF: *I would have to assume that's one of the reasons why Disney enjoyed the idea to begin with, they saw it as being multi-generational.*

DAVE: Yeah, and from the outset I think they wanted to release it under the Disney banner rather than Touchstone, simply to identify it as a family picture.

JEFF: *But knowing the story as well as I do from the comics, I don't see it as a kid's film that adults can enjoy.*

DAVE: No, not at all, it does not cater to kids in any way.

JEFF: *It's just that they can enjoy it, too.*

DAVE: It's like the old Warner Bros. cartoons, they're for people our age, they're not for little kids.

JEFF: *But it translates.*

DAVE: Yeah, the kids will get it, even if they don't understand it quite the way they should. They will know that they're being privy to something that's written a little above them, and that makes a kid feel a lot better about what he's watching.

JEFF: *Let's talk about something that I find really fun, the merchandising.* (Laughter.) *Is this going to be the summer of The Rocketeer at toy stores and everywhere else?*

DAVE: I don't know, I don't know how extensive it's going to be. I think they're being cautious on this one, they don't want to flood the market with a bunch of junk. They've tapped me for some ideas for things.

JEFF: *Are you a person who the merchandisers have to come to?*

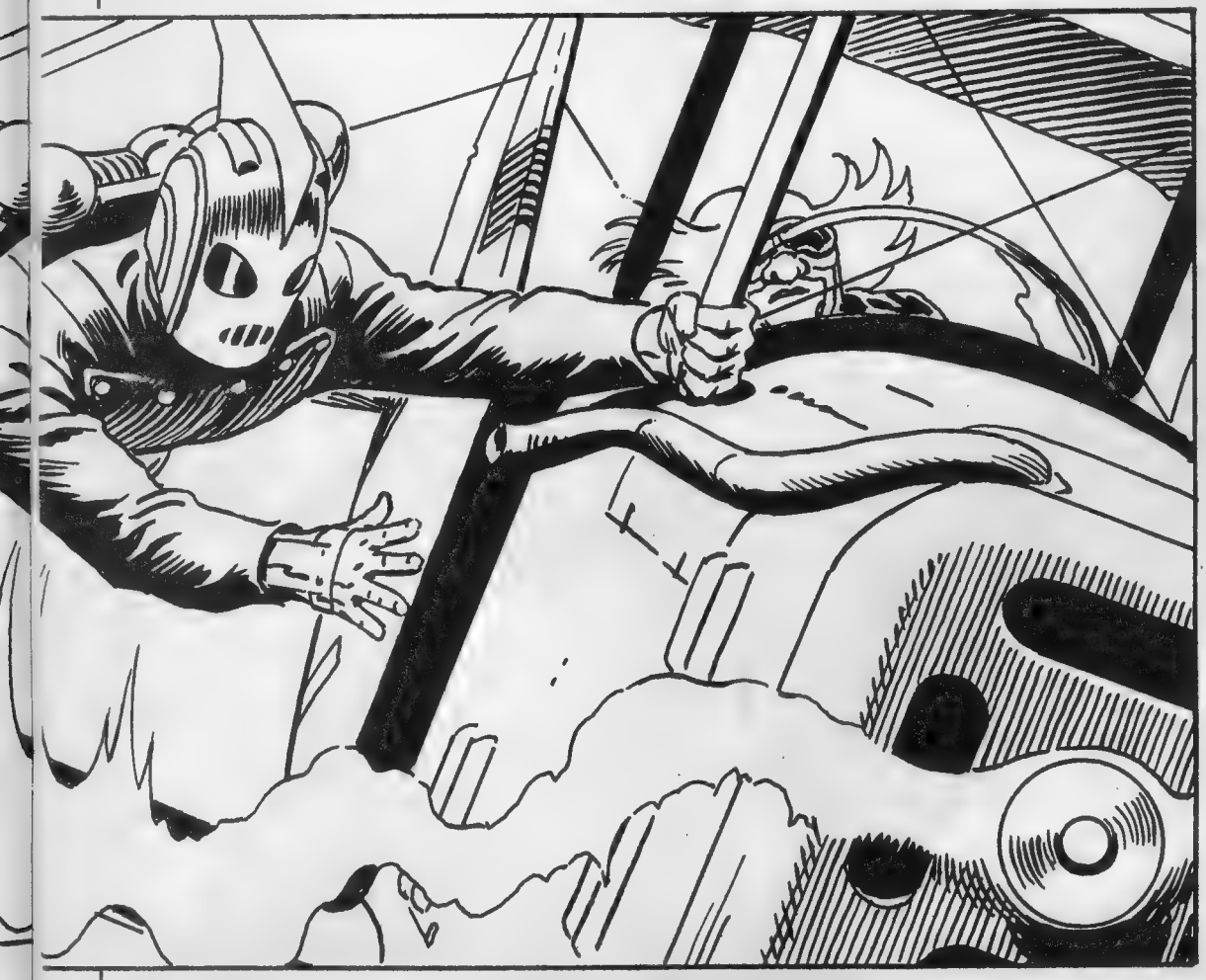
DAVE: Not necessarily.

JEFF: *Actually, for that matter, do you still own this character?*

DAVE: I own pieces, I've retained certain things. My involvement, as far as merchandising goes, is not really spelled out clearly, but I am doing signature things like signature shirts or other things that are specifically done by *me.* And I am designing or visualizing products for them, *possible* products that may or may not get made. There is one thing that I would *dearly* love to see, a Rocketeer radio.

JEFF: *Oh, yeah!*

DAVE: Like an old-style casing for modern components, but sculpted in relief would be whatever ROCKETEER-related subject matter. There are a lot of possibilities for really classy visual things, not necessarily just blatant toy stuff. I'd love to see them go back and try to do the kind of merchandising that they did



"I was being used for conceptual things, which I enjoy

before World War II, just kinda oddball things that you wouldn't really expect. They're going to do the toy stuff for kids, of course, but for adults I would like to see pocket watches and that kind of stuff.

JEFF: *That would be great. Myself, I wouldn't mind buying the action figures.* (Laughter.)

DAVE: Only if they don't have he-man proportions.

JEFF: *Yes, you've got it!*

DAVE: Well, unfortunately, I don't know how the figures are going to look because that is always something that the licensee handles. They pay Disney for the license to *do* whatever toys they're planning and they generate the stuff, and hopefully they'll get good sculptors and do a decent job. Yeah, I would love to see them with *human* proportions for a change.

JEFF: *I'm waiting for the inflatable Jennifer doll.* (Laughter.) *A few issues ago, in COMICS INTERVIEW, there were some storyboards from the film: how did it feel for you to see other artists interpreting your characters for the film?*

DAVE: Well, those weren't for the film, those were presentation boards done for merchandising. It was generated by Continuity, the studio, and I think Neal hit the heads and close-ups on some of them — there was definitely some of his work in there, which I was tickled to death to see. To see somebody of that stature draw your character is a real thrill. The same holds true with **Heath** and **Gray Morrow.**

JEFF: *I don't remember seeing Morrow's stuff.*

DAVE: He's doing a little eight-pager for DISNEY ADVENTURE MAGAZINE.

JEFF: *That'll be fun, Morrow's great also.*

DAVE: Yeah.

JEFF: *He's right for a character that's based in a real world.*

DAVE: Yep, one of my all time faves.

JEFF: *So, it didn't feel awkward to you at all to see someone like Neal Adams do your characters?*

DAVE: What do you think! *(Laughter.)* As far as the boards from the film, though, the actual nuts-and-bolts storyboards, we had some really good guys in the business, certainly very well qualified to do this kind of thing, but they're no-frills boards, you know. The **Neal Adams**/Continuity boards were purposely done as presentation boards to look *good,* and they were shopped to Continuity because they *wanted* them to look good. The other boards just have to

more than drawing out and measuring out all this stuff."

be functional.

JEFF: *I'm surprised they didn't have you do them.*

DAVE: I didn't have the time or the interest. I did board a short teaser reel that they filmed that was to be released around Thanksgiving.

JEFF: *I don't think I've seen that.*

DAVE: They shot it but in editing something went wrong and they didn't like it. It looked good in visuals but when they cut it together they wanted something else. They may end up using pieces of it with the final trailer, I don't know.

JEFF: *Do you have a sense of how long a picture this is going to be?*

DAVE: It's definitely not going to be over two hours. I would love to have it right *at* two hours, I would love to have every second of what we shot, but obviously there's going to be little bits and pieces that will go by the wayside.

JEFF: *Are you allowed to say what the budget ended up being?*

DAVE: I don't even know at this point. Everybody's been kind of closemouthed about it because, when you start to talk about how much money you're spending, automatically it starts to escalate, so we've just not talked about it. Nobody *wants* it to go out of control, which it isn't. It's a *healthy* budget, believe me. It's a very expensive picture.

JEFF: *Is there a release date yet?*

DAVE: June 20, 1991.

JEFF: *Looking like you'll actually make that date?*

DAVE: So far. It's in the effects stage now, post production is just really cranking. They're working six-day weeks, easily.

JEFF: *One of the ironies that I'm hearing is that for a guy who everyone knows first as an artist — and that's not to denigrate your work as a storyteller — that your involvement in the picture is very* little *on the art side and very much so on every other side. You don't miss that?*

DAVE: Not really, because I was there while the other artists were generating things, I was being tapped for ideas *constantly.* And giving them little roughs or sketches or things. It was great because it was almost like running a studio, an art studio. Not that I was playing boss at all, but I was being used for conceptual things, which I enjoy *more* than the *drudge* of drawing out and measuring out all of this stuff, which they do infinitely better.

JEFF: *That's the second time that you've mentioned the drudgery involved in being an artist.*

DAVE: *(Laughter.)*

JEFF: *I wonder, though, because some people really enjoy the process; some just like the results. Which are you?*

DAVE: I'm both, but definitely I prefer just viewing the results. The other is such a process of hair pulling for me. It's tough to say what is more or less fun or aggravating, whether it's line art or paintings or comics or fine art or whatever. It is all a lot of work, by no means effortless. It's not something that you can sit down and just *wish* onto the paper.

JEFF: *Do you know artists for whom it does come easier?*

DAVE: Oh, definitely, yeah. *Moebius* is one of them.

JEFF: *He just can put it down?*

DAVE: Yep. There are a handful of guys that can do that, **Toth** is another.

JEFF: *But it seems to me that you've put yourself in your own corner because your style is not the sort of style that could ever be done loosely.*

DAVE: No, and I knew that.

JEFF: *Do you regret that?*

DAVE: In some ways, yeah, because I'll never be able to do anything *rapidly.* It'll never happen.

JEFF: *If, for example . . . let's put it this way, I know you love ROCKETEER, but do you ever feel like you're so married to what the audience expects of you that you're not even doing what you would want to do?*

DAVE: Never, no, I *always* draw it for myself. Every inking line on there is for me.

JEFF: *You are doing what you want to do, it just happens to take forever.*

DAVE: Yeah. *(Laughter.)* I just — I'm a detail freak. I don't believe that I'm anal retentive about it, you know. I don't fill every damn corner with every little scrap and cigarette butt that's on the floor. But I do enjoy *richness* and depth of field, you know. I love putting what I feel is the *appropriate* amount of detail into it. And that *does* take time, and unfortunately I

"The best compliment is 'You don't remind me of anyone.'"

More ROCKETEER/Dark Horse work from Dave, Art and Mike.

lose interest after a certain number of hours on a piece.

JEFF: *I'm not sure how you could help but do that. I'm trying to think at this point in your career who you remind me of and I realize that I don't think you remind me of anyone, anymore.*

DAVE: *(Laughter.)* That's good, that is good.

JEFF: *It would have been a lot easier to pick your influences ten years ago than it is right now.*

DAVE: Yeah, yeah, definitely. And that's the best compliment I can get, if somebody says, "Well, you don't really remind me of anybody else."

JEFF: *I mean, I know that you and I grew up enjoying the same people's work — Frazetta and all those people — but now I'd look at this and go, "That's Dave Stevens." Is there anyone working today that you still enjoy looking at?*

DAVE: Yeah. I love **Mike Mignola's** work, **Craig Russell's, Kaluta** and a lot of the guys that I still hang out with and appreciate like I did when I was an adolescent, **Kubert** and **Buscema** and whoever else. But of the new school I'm not really all that familiar.

JEFF: *Didn't you do an intro or a comment on Mark Schultz for something?*

DAVE: Yeah, definitely. I don't know if I did an intro, I may have done some kind of an endorsement or something.

JEFF: *It seems like he's the kind of guy you would be very —*

DAVE: Yeah, and I would dearly love to work with him on a graphic novel or something. It doesn't seem fated to happen right away, we both are married to our projects, but we've talked about it several times.

JEFF: *The only question is who would draw the dinosaurs?* (Laughter.) *You would both want to.*

DAVE: I would probably just write the thing and maybe art direct it or something like that.

JEFF: *Could you be satisfied just being the writer on a project at this point?*

DAVE: Not *just* writing, I'd want a *little* bit to do with the art. But at this point I really, in a visual storytelling format, would rather be the fellow generating the synopsis, the characters and all that, and allow somebody else to step in and visualize it and bring it to life.

"My favorite girl art from the '40s and '50s would be

From the PLAYBOY gallery: Alberto Vargas's Batgirl.

Gil Elvgrin. He was — very simply — the best."

JEFF: *I think that's very ironic, but you're hardly the first person to go that route.*

DAVE: I don't look at it as giving up, either — giving up on the medium or giving up on my own career. I just feel like it's the natural progression of where I should move.

JEFF: *Not only that but there's really only so many hours in a day and you probably have a lot more ideas in your head than you have time to make them real.*

DAVE: Yeah, and that's one of the reasons why I would much rather bring somebody else in.

JEFF: *Now, this coffee-table book, for example, would that be your artwork or just something that you would have some part in?*

DAVE: No, that would have to be my artwork, but it's not going to be a comic book. It *won't* be a graphic novel, it won't be anything like that. It will be an illustrated book. That is one of the scariest things about that, is that I am not sure I'm really a writer, so it may be written in tandem with someone else. But it'll . . . the format will be almost like a Big Little Book, a page of text and a page of art.

JEFF: *Not quite as small?*

DAVE: No, no, it's going to be horizontal, ten by fourteen roughly.

JEFF: *Any clues as to the genre?*

DAVE: Nope.

JEFF: *Not a word?*

DAVE: I don't want to jinx it. I feel that talking about something long in advance of doing it is cutting your own throat.

JEFF: *It adds fuel to the fire later of the guys who can say, "But wait a minute, five years ago you said —."*

DAVE: Yeah, exactly.

JEFF: *Do you still enjoy drawing beautiful women?*

DAVE: That's something that I'll probably go to my grave loving. If I want to relax and just cut loose, that's what I'll do. I've got pieces in various stages at home that I'll set aside and finish later when I have some more time. Yeah, that's one of the areas where my heart really lies.

JEFF: *I was in New York about three weeks ago and there was a gallery down there that had three pieces left of an estate collection of original Vargas.*

DAVE: Wow.

JEFF: *Just seeing one or two of his originals, remarkable work. When you do work for yourself, what medium do you do it in?*

DAVE: Everything — whatever seems right for the piece.

Early Gil Elvgrin girlie painting, one of Dave's favorite artists.

JEFF: *Who are your cultural — what's the word? — predecessors, in that area that you really enjoy?*

DAVE: I hate to even bring them up because as soon as you start talking about them in print to a bunch of collectors, that drives the price up. I'm *frantically* still trying to find clippings of these people's work. But —

JEFF: *Oh, well.*

DAVE: — here we go! *(Laughter.)* My favorite, probably the *pinnacle* of good girl art from the '40s and '50s, would be **Gil Elvgrin.** He used to do mostly calendar art, and you may have seen some playing card sets or greeting cards — a lot of commercially-used imagery. Probably the best painter, *technically* the best, and a wonderfully sunny style.

JEFF: *I wish I could say I was familiar with his work. In that area when you get much beyond Vargas I'm a wash.*

DAVE: There were a lot of them. **Zoe Mozert** was the only female pin-up artist of the '30s and '40s, and she did some *fabulous* portraiture.

JEFF: *You and I were talking about Robert McGinnis earlier.*

DAVE: Oh, yeah, geez. For a more contemporary style, from the '60s on, he would be the guy, just a real sophisticated attitude about all his women, *very* elegant.

JEFF: *Do you actually go out and buy books just because he does the covers?*

"I've been given an incredible opportunity to run

DAVE: Yeah, I have since adolescence. I *spotted* them in the drug stores, and then I started going back and finding the old ones. Somebody at some point should do a book on McGinnis' paperback women.

JEFF: *I'm shocked that no one's done that yet — we're giving someone a good idea right here!* (Laughter.) *We want to read that book!*

DAVE: Yeah.

JEFF: *I read that he's illustrated over 1,200 paperback covers.*

DAVE: Easily, easily.

JEFF: *Obviously, not all of them are beautiful women, but just the same —*

DAVE: *Most* of them.

JEFF: *Do you still use models?*

DAVE: Yeah, definitely. I'd say maybe a third or a fourth of them have come from my head. I do the sketch, that obviously comes from my head, then I go and shoot and pick up partials of hands or shoulder blades or whatever I need details of that I feel I've got to have down as far as the way the light falls, the shadows fall, all of that — photographic reference is a necessity.

JEFF: *What about for men?*

DAVE: The same. But since, at least in covers, I don't concentrate on men that much, I don't shoot them very often — but when I do I just grab whoever and dress them accordingly. That's always been really easy. The tough part is finding good female models.

JEFF: *Even here in L.A.?*

DAVE: It's not that you can't find models, it's finding models who can bend. A lot of women, believe it or not, don't have the grace that you would expect. Some of them are very awkward and just don't really turn *naturally* in a way that looks good aesthetically in the camera. The *best* is to get somebody that's already got some experience, you know. I've got four or five that I use all the time.

JEFF: *Do the faces come from you? If I were to pass this woman on the street might I say, "Hm, something about her is*

Two paperback covers by artist Robert McGinnis.

with the ball right now. I've got to follow through."

familiar"?

DAVE: *(Laughter.)* No, they're always kind of a made-up face. Sometimes they'll come from the girl, it just depends on what the piece is. I always lean more toward a softer look, more of a sweet look rather than a hard look, and I don't go for the sharp-featured look at all. No high cheekbones, no straight, pointed noses.

JEFF: *You have your image of what you want, the Stevens woman?*

DAVE: Yeah, but I don't want it to get so homogenous that it's always such a facial sameness that people get bored by it. I'm trying to vary it.

JEFF: *You'll have to just not be embarrassed about it when it comes out. In the meantime just loan me your little black book.* (Laughter.) *Anyway, I think I've covered what I need to know. Actually, let me ask one or two more questions. THE ROCKETEER is going to end, it'll end this year — I mean the movie will. Where does Dave Stevens go from there?*

DAVE: Right into that next project. Whether or not . . . right now I have an option of pitching one property or another. One is the book that I was telling you about. Whether I *pitch* that or go ahead and *do* it first, that's one choice I have to make before I make the other choice, which is to pitch *this* property or *another* property.

JEFF: *As a film?*

DAVE: As a film. There are two properties that are in so-so shape. I still have to do a lot of visuals and the package itself, the presentation package, has yet to be put together. But there are two. One of them's live action, the other is animated.

JEFF: *Animating in the Dave Stevens style?*

DAVE: Definitely, yeah.

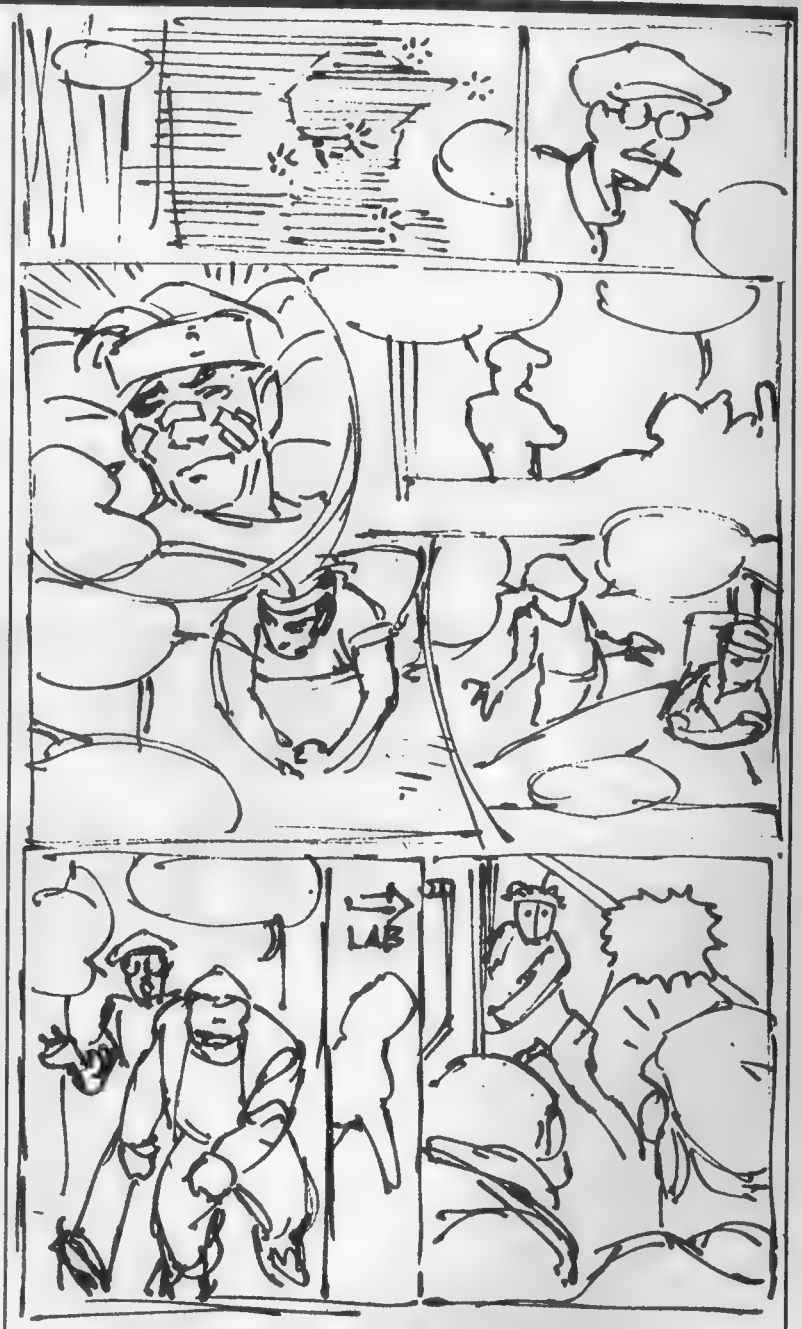
JEFF: *Hard to imagine.*

DAVE: *(Laughter.)* Well, no, not in *this* style. We're talking about squash and stretch style.

JEFF: *Squash and stretch?*

DAVE: That's an industry term for funny cartoons. When you think of feature animation, most people *instantly* call to mind the Disney style, which is **Milt Call,** the artist that did most of the model sheets. He styled things like SLEEPING BEAUTY, ROBIN HOOD, JUNGLE BOOK; that real angular Disney style. What I'm trying to convey is a more rounded, softer style that is more indicative of the pre-war animation style. That's what I've laid out for this feature.

JEFF: *It sounds to me like your immediate future is film.*



Early page breakdowns from Pacific Comics' ROCKETEER.

DAVE: I feel like I've got to give it my best shot, because I've been given an incredible opportunity to run with the ball right now. I feel like I've *got* to follow through or I'm not being true to myself.

JEFF: *If the movie does well, does this essentially pay you back for all of your years toiling at the strip?*

DAVE: I don't think so. *(Laughter.)* It'll pay me back in that I'll feel justified in putting as much faith as I have in this property.

JEFF: *That's as good a reward as any.*

DAVE: Yeah. That'll be enough for me. It will legitimize everything that I've been working towards. Even if it doesn't do what Disney expects or what I expect at the box office, at the very least I'll know that we did our very best to make the picture that we wanted to make. What else can you hope for?

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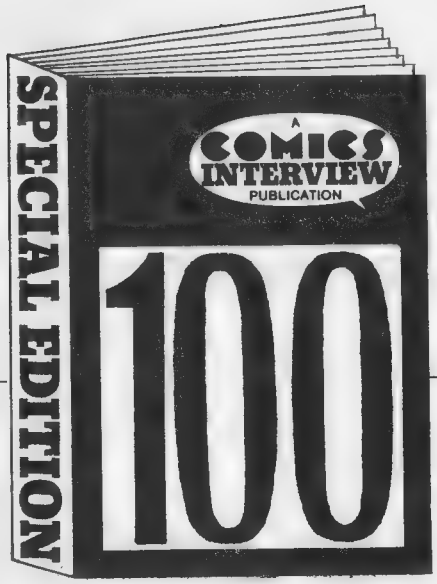

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THE 100
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Have you ever speculated as to who really are the most powerful people in the comics industry — or, more to the point, how they rank?

In this landmark issue, COMICS INTERVIEW offers a roll call of the people who pull the strings. After hundreds of phone calls and interviews around the industry, plenty of debates among ourselves and even a little bit of lobbying by some of the people who wanted to be included — or left off — we have the list of the 100 most powerful and influential people in comics.

This isn't a popularity contest or another listing of fan favorites here. Let's face it, to make it to the top you sometimes have to step on a few toes. What put these people on our list is power. The power to make things happen — or to pull the plug.

But it takes more than merely occupying an influential position. We looked for people who don't just have potential power, but who currently *exercise* that influence in comics. Some still hold considerable sway, but are content to exercise it sporadically or ineffectively, if at all.

That's why we left some very nice people off the list, Stan Lee among them.

And there are a few people here who have a lot more respect than they do friends. These people have the power. And, for better or for worse, they're not afraid to use it.

In the end, our methodology came down to this: If you want to get something done in our field — who are you going to call? Who are today's movers and shakers in the comics industry? Who's in, who's out?

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"Sigourney Weaver, she's very sweet, she's the

GENE

Above: Pencils from WOLVERINE. Next page: Pencils from PANTHER'S QUEST.

In parts one and two, freelancer Gene "the Dean" Colan reminisced about his early years in comics, working for companies such as Marvel, DC, Archie, Quality, Dell and the legendary Stan Lee, and working with writers and editors such as Julie Schwartz, Marv Wolfman, Don McGregor and many others.

Here in part three, Gene continues his reminiscences with memories of trying to get into the movie industry with the help of Sigourney Weaver, his work with Archie Goodwin, Harvey Kurtzman, Jack Kirby, among others, and the class he teaches on the "Art of Comic-Book Drawing"...

DAVID HAMILTON: *I know there's something that you've always wanted but have never been able to really attain, and that's doing work on a movie.*

GENE COLAN: Nobody's ever asked me to do a movie; I think I'd drop dead if somebody asked me to do a movie. *(Laughter.)* Don has made a film. He asked me to come in on it, not as a director but just a small part, and I just didn't have the chance to do it.

DAVID: *As an actor?*

GENE: Yeah, as an actor.

DAVID: *But it seems like you would be the best storyboardist ever.*

GENE: I would love to do storyboards, and I've looked into it briefly. I had an experience with **Sigourney Weaver,** I think I told you —

DAVID: *No, you didn't.*

GENE: She lives in the building that I live in. I've seen her a few times in the building, and I once asked a favor of her. I wanted to be put in touch with someone that does storyboards, and she tried to help me out. She was very sweet, she made some personal calls for me and called me back.

DAVID: *You showed her some of your work, I suppose.*

GENE: She told me she knew nothing at all about comics, it would literally be a waste of time — but she's very sweet, she's the sweetest person I've ever met in show business. I said to her, "Well, look,

All artwork accompanying this interview ©1989 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc., unless otherwise noted.

sweetest person I've ever met in show business."

COLAN

"I was never very good with science fiction —

for whatever it's worth, I thought you might like to look anyway," and I sent her up some of my work. And she loved it! She really meant it, she's a very sincere person. It's rare to find people like that, *especially* perhaps in show business. Popularity can easily go to their heads, but she's nothing at all like that. She's so unassuming and so natural that you hardly even realize who you're talking to.

And I'll tell you who I heard from, a film director . . . he gave a lot of actors their starts, did grade B movies and old horror films . . . **Roger Corman.** I wrote him a script. I never heard anything for quite awhile and I wanted to know what in the world became of my script! So I made a call to find out what was happening, called out to California — and the only reason I knew where to call was my wife had watched a TV show the day before and he was on the show as a guest, and she took note of what company he was associated with at the time, I think it was New World Pictures —

DAVID: *Right, before he sold it.*

GENE: She got his address, so I wrote to him and I never got an answer, which generally is par for the course anyway. Then I decided to give him a call, and I got his secretary on and couldn't get through to him. I called back a day later, got the same secretary, and this time I said, "*Warner Bros. —*" *(Laughter.)* That's what did it, he came to the phone quicker than you could blink your eye! *(Laughter.)* Then I introduced myself, told him about the script I had written, and he asked me quickly what it was about — he was very nice to me on the phone, a real gentleman. He said, "Just forward it on and I'll read it." And I got a reply — I got a lot of encouragement. *(Laughter.)* And that was my brief encounter with **Roger Corman.** It was a nice one.

DAVID: *Well, hopefully in the future the two of you will work together.*

GENE: Who knows?

DAVID: *Comics fans don't look forward to comics artists doing work in films because they never get to see it.*

GENE: Yeah.

DAVID: *I wish somebody would publish storyboard work, I think there's a market for that. But in the case of yourself, you could look at almost any comics story that you've ever done and it damn near looks like a shooting script, as far as storyboarding is concerned.*

GENE: Well, that's the influence. That's what turns me on.

DAVID: *What are the films that you really love and that have influenced you over the last 35 or 40 years?*

Doctor Strange sketch from fanzine, circa 1970.

with intricate-looking scenery, for some reason."

VITAL STATISTICS

Name: Gene Colan
Born: 1 September 1926 — Manhattan, NY
Occupation: Artist/Writer
Art Training: The Art Students League of New York
Credits: BLACKHAWK; SHANNON; HOPALONG CASSIDY; numerous war books for Timely; Paul Sherry Studios; BEN CASEY; IRON MAN; SUB-MARINER; DAREDEVIL; •AVENGERS; DOCTOR STRANGE; CAPTAIN AMERICA; CAPTAIN MARVEL; BLACK WIDOW; HOWARD THE DUCK; TOMB OF DRACULA; BROTHER VOODOO; THE INCREDIBLE HULK; RAGAMUFFINS; BATMAN; WONDER WOMAN; NIGHT FORCE; JEMM; NATHANIEL DUSK I and II; BLOODSCENT; BLACK PANTHER; WOLVERINE; Archie Comics; the list goes on . . .
Favorite Films: TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD; PATTON; and the list goes on . . .
Hobby: Photography
Favorite Writer in Comics: Don McGregor

This interesting (multiple-image) sketch graced the cover of a mid-'70s fanzine.

GENE: Oh, I've always loved TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD, it's a very *fine* film. I've shown it in my class because it's a beautiful job of storytelling. The acting is superb. **Gregory Peck,** he literally *becomes* that character he plays in the film. It's one of my favorite all-time films. There are many. PATTON is another one I keep watching over and over and over again.

DAVID: *The film he wouldn't even accept an Academy Award for.*

GENE: No, he wouldn't, but that's the way **George Scott** is anyway.

DAVID: *I agree with him, I don't believe in awards for performances in the arts.*

GENE: It makes other people feel bad.

DAVID: *Yeah, and there's no such thing as the "best."*

GENE: Right. Every actor and every artist has strong points and weak points.

DAVID: *I can't think of any weak points — okay, I can think of one thing that you're fairly soft on, only one. The design of machinery.*

GENE: Yes, right. I was never very good with science fiction. When it comes to intricate-looking scenery, for some reason . . . I'm probably not *interested* in science fiction all that much.

DAVID: *Jack Kirby, of course, is the king —*

GENE: Sure.

DAVID: *But you have more or less made a career of focusing on scenes, and when it came to machinery it was in the background, wasn't important, so you made it simplistic. Nevertheless, you've spoken about how Stan Lee and various others have said how difficult some of your layout and design was for readers to understand.*

GENE: Yes.

"Center of attention — that's what I focus on."

INDISPUTABLY, THE POWER OF THE MAN RADIATES OUTWARD AND VAN DER MEERWE KNOWS HE MUST NOT WAVER...
HE MUST HAVE TOTAL CONVICTION HE CAN AIM HIS WEAPON BEFORE THE TERRORIST STRIKES
INDECISIVENESS IN SUCH A SITUATION CAN GET YOU KILLED!
GET UP!
WHOOT
YOU WATCHED LITTLE CHILDREN FALL...
...AND THEY MANAGED TO GET UP.
NOW, LET US SEE IF YOU CAN DO WHAT LITTLE CHILDREN HAD TO DO BECAUSE OF YOU!

Five dynamic panels from Gene's BLACK PANTHER work with Don McGregor (inking by Tom Palmer) — PANTHER'S QUEST, a 200-plus page epic from Marvel.

DAVID: *But you would always center on the center of attention. How is it that you can concentrate in such a way where you can get such a view on a story, a scene in a story?*

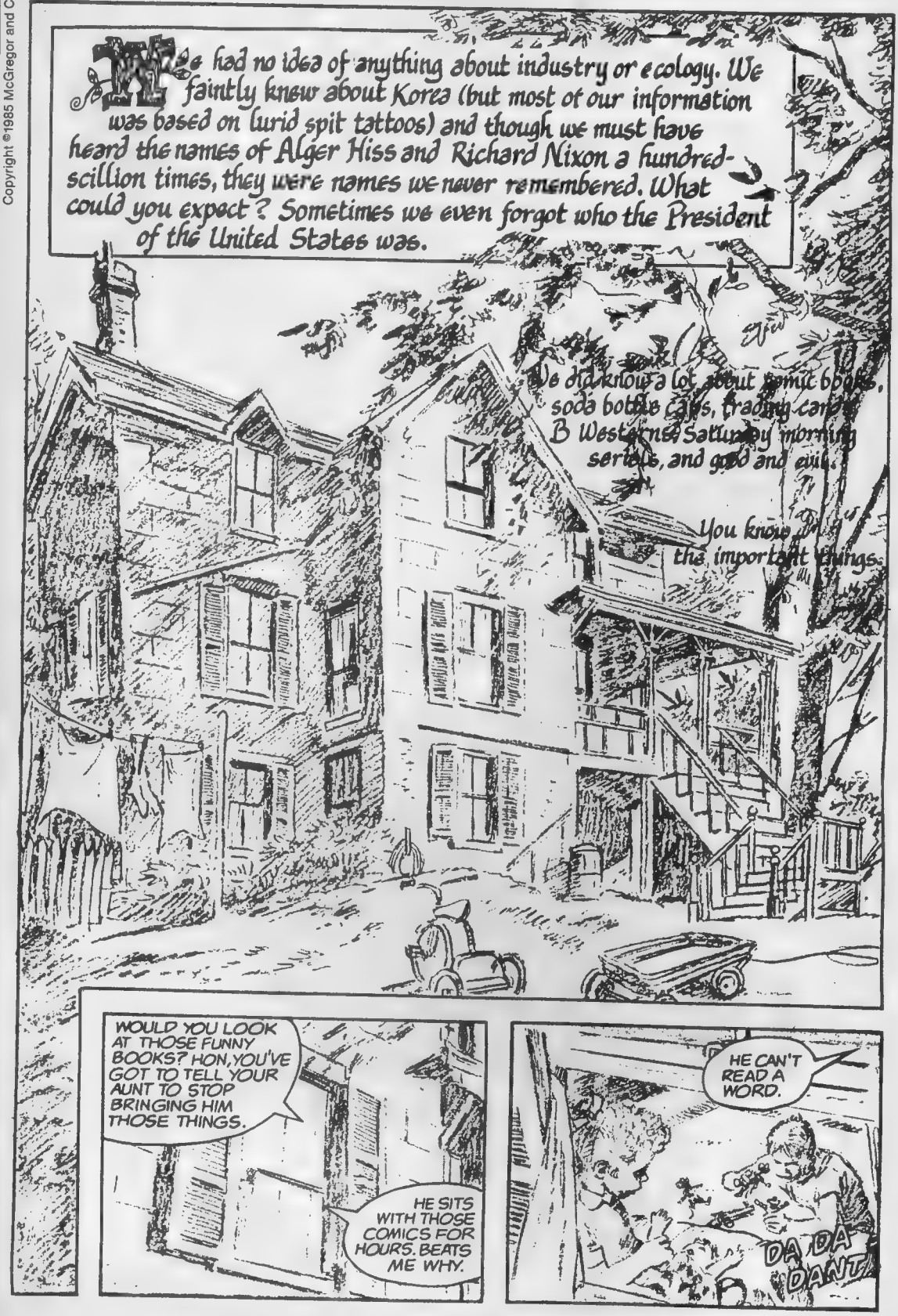
GENE: Centering on the focus of attention? I read the script and whatever seems to me to be the focus of attention, that's what I focus on, and everything else I just fill in after that. If two people are talking in Grand Central Station, and Grand Central Station is a crowded place, and it's somewhat an aerial view of it, I'll focus in on them because they're doing the talking. And I'll have them dressed practically in black, and everybody else will be wearing white clothing, so that yout attention goes right to them. I could have 1,000 figures there and yet you'll see them as the outstanding figures, simply because I made it that way. The attention *should* be there.

DAVID: *And that's something that the casual reader doesn't always notice. You are controlling them, but they don't realize that you are controlling them.*

GENE: Well, that's exactly right. I don't know if I ever told you, but in the film PATTON there was a scene that was not all that important, but it was a big scene

Front cover (wrap-around) from Marvel's Black Panther series. 207 months after Dracula#1... Gene Colan inks Eugene Colan.

Copyright ©1985 McGregor and Colan.


We had no idea of anything about industry or ecology. We faintly knew about Korea (but most of our information was based on lurid spit tattoos) and though we must have heard the names of Alger Hiss and Richard Nixon a hundred-scillion times, they were names we never remembered. What could you expect? Sometimes we even forgot who the President of the United States was.
We did know a lot about comic books, soda bottle caps, trading cards, B Westerns, Saturday morning serials, and good and evil.
You know, the important things.
WOULD YOU LOOK AT THOSE FUNNY BOOKS? HON, YOU'VE GOT TO TELL YOUR AUNT TO STOP BRINGING HIM THOSE THINGS.
HE SITS WITH THOSE COMICS FOR HOURS. BEATS ME WHY.
HE CAN'T READ A WORD.
DA DA DAN!

RAGAMUFFINS from writer Don McGregor. Pictures by Colan.

"I don't always focus in on what the director wants."

on the screen. **George Scott** was not in it . . . he *might* have been in it, I'm not sure now. But the scene was between two officers talking during the heat of a battle, and the camera was up *close* to them while they were discussing their next move. In the background, of course, there was a lot of noise, the shells were being lobbed around.

My attention was diverted for a moment to what was going on way out of focus in the background — because I *look* for background things, I don't always focus in on what the director wants you to see. But the director, **Franklin Schaffner,** evidently *wanted* you to see something else, or *hoped* that you would spot it. This G.I. was crawling out of the trenches, trying to get to another trench. They were being bombarded *heavily* by the Germans, he was hugging the ground, he was practically *kissing* the ground, making sure that he'd get there — and he was *shot!* Crouched, he was sort of on his knees like bellying along or something, and then you knew that he was shot and he fell. And a medic comes crawling out of the trench rather quickly, grabs him by the legs or whatever part of his clothing, and drags him back for cover.

Now, that in itself was a little story. It had *nothing* whatsoever to do with what was in the immediate foreground, but it was something that *added* to the realism of the story — because in war those things happen. It's not just the two officers speaking about their next move, how they were going to defeat the Germans in this battle; it was the real thing! It made you feel that this was *not* a movie, that this was *really* going on. I was very *impressed* with that. These are little details that only a very special director would take the time and trouble to do. I mean, why spend the money and time to even bother with that when they didn't have to? It's the little added touches that make for the final picture.

DAVID: *You add those little touches in your stories. I just assume that they're your ideas; is that true?*

GENE: They're not mentioned in the script, no. Those things I do to fit the

Gene's "Doc Savage" from Jim Steranko's MEDIASCENE (circa 1970).

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STAR LORD
25
issue #17
("BUT I STILL DON'T SEE THE PROBLEM -- IF THE VAST MAJORITY IS OPPOSED TO -")
("LETS JUST SAY WE ARE POWERLESS IN THE FACE OF A MILITARY COUP--- AND ONE WE LONG AGO GAVE THEM BY MAJORITY")
(UNFORTUNATELY, UNLIKE THE REST OF US, THE MILITARY IS STRUCTURED ON A SYSTEM OF LOYALTY)

Pencil page from Marvel Super Color#14 (STAR-LORD).

YOU HAVE BEEN FED A MONUMENTAL PYRAMID OF LIES.
THERE'S NO INPUT FROM QUILL'S QUARTERS --HE'S NOT THERE!
MAYBE HE'S JUST OUT FOR A WALK. GIVE HIM ANOTHER FIFTEEN MINUTES--
"--AND IF HE'S NOT BACK BY THEN, WE'LL ALERT NOAH."
NOAH LIED WHEN HE SAID WE ALL ACCEPT THE ARK AS OUR ONLY HOME. MOST OF US DO ACCEPT IT--BUT NOAH AND HIS CRONIES DO NOT.
THE MILITARY MIND IS NOT CONTENT TO SIT STILL. THEY FEEL A NEED TO "COMPLETE THE QUEST."
IT IS THE VERY DEFINITION OF THEIR IDENTITIES. BUT THE VAST MAJORITY OF US IS CONTENT-- THIS IS THE ONLY HOME WE'VE EVER KNOWN.
BUT...
I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND. IF THE MAJORITY IS OPPOSED TO--
LET'S SAY WE'RE POWERLESS IN THE FACE OF A MILITARY COUP--
--A SLOW COUP, TO BE SURE, AND ONE WE LONG AGO GAVE THEM BY MAJORITY VOTE.
UNLIKE THE COMMON PEOPLE-- THE MILITARY IS STRUCTURED ON LEADERSHIP. THEY NOW HAVE ALL THE WEAPONS-- AND A STRONG LEADER.

And here's the finished product, inked in by Thomas Palmer.

"Artists are always on the lookout for expressions."

conversation. If the conversation calls for something that I think would be helpful to the body language of a character, then I'll have him take his glasses off — you notice how sometimes people hear better or they talk better if they take their glasses off, suddenly they're getting very serious. They'll take their glasses off as if to say, "What did you just say to me? *Now* I'm ready to hear it!"

Artists do those things, like writers. **Somerset Maugham** used to travel on a train or a bus or whatever, and he'd have a little notebook pad with him, and he would listen to conversations between people and copy down sentences so that he could use that type of thing in his writing. Artists are always on the lookout for expressions and the way people walk and talk and that kind of stuff. Any true artist generally does that.

DAVID: *Well — in film this would be called a lightning cut — but there have been a lot of little weird things that have come up about you, for instance when there was the first opportunity for THE PRISONER to be brought to comics Marvel announced that you were going to be the artist. And it didn't happen.*

GENE: No, it didn't. I went up to Marv's home and he had some 16-mm. prints that he had borrowed or owned, I don't know, on THE PRISONER, and he wanted me to do the story for it . . . I think it was Marv that wanted me to do it. He wanted me to get familiar with the plot, and I was into it, I was ready to do it. Then . . . I don't remember what happened, whether I turned it down or it was taken away from me . . .

DAVID: *What kind of feelings did you have about possibly doing — considering that you've already done adaptation of things such as JAWS 2, METEOR —*

GENE: NIGHTWINGS.

DAVID: *The remake of LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS. So, what was the feeling back when you thought you might be doing THE PRISONER?*

GENE: I thought it was exciting . . . You're asking me something that I can't really give you a definite answer on, but if I have to take a guess I would say that I was enthused enough to do it, but not too thrilled about all of the work that would be involved. *(Laughter.)*

DAVID: *A lot of thinking, because that was such a thinking man's show.*

GENE: Oh, yes. But it was an awful lot of work, a lot of figure work.

DAVID: *I can imagine. I want to throw out some names and have you free associate. Just feel free to give me whatever comes across your mind. Archie Goodwin.*

Cover detail from Colan's 1st DOCTOR STRANGE #172, 1968. Over the years Gene drew a total of 686 pages for various D.S. series (1968-81).

"I wanted to work for EC but couldn't get to first base."

Above: panel from DR. STRANGE #45 (3rd series), inked by Tom Palmer (one of the last for both men). Below: Gene's pencils from D.S. #16, page five.

GENE: Archie Goodwin, a very soft-spoken fellow. We had a very good relationship up at Warren, and we finally just went our separate ways. He got involved in other things, and so did I, and that was the end of it. I still see Archie from time to time up at Marvel.

DAVID: *Next, the one EC job you did.*

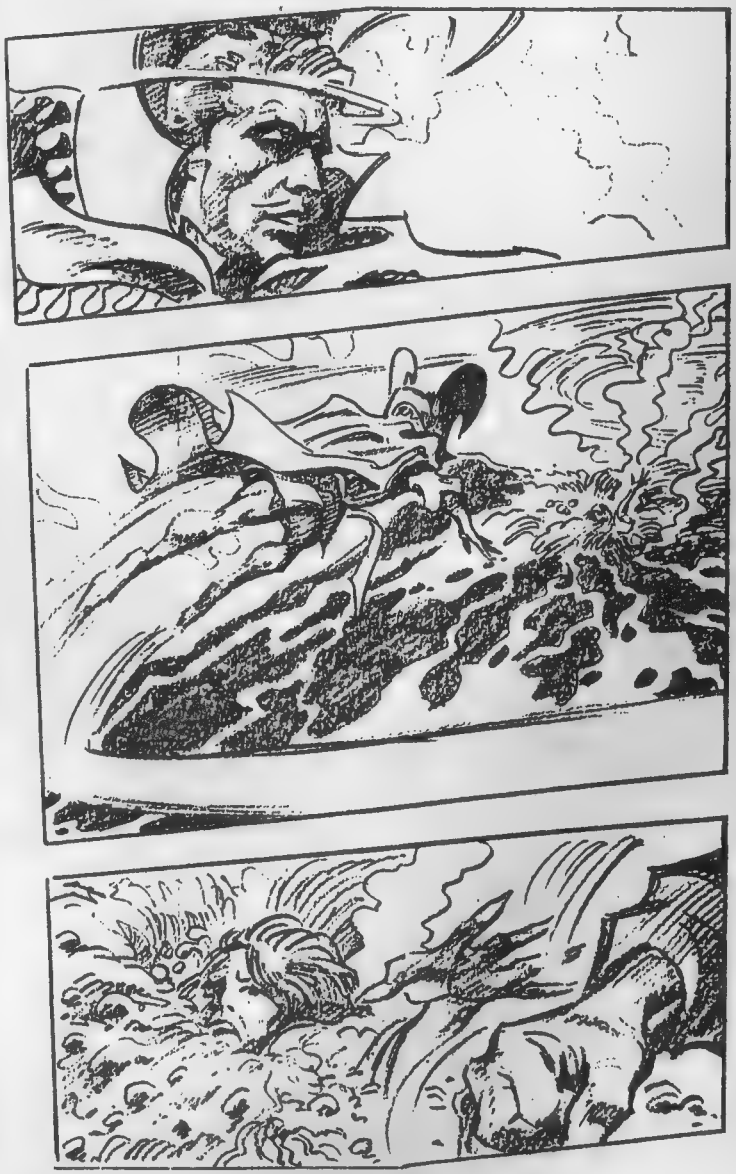
GENE: Yes, **Harvey Kurtzman.** I liked it. I *killed* myself on it because I really wanted to work for EC at that time. But I couldn't get to first base.

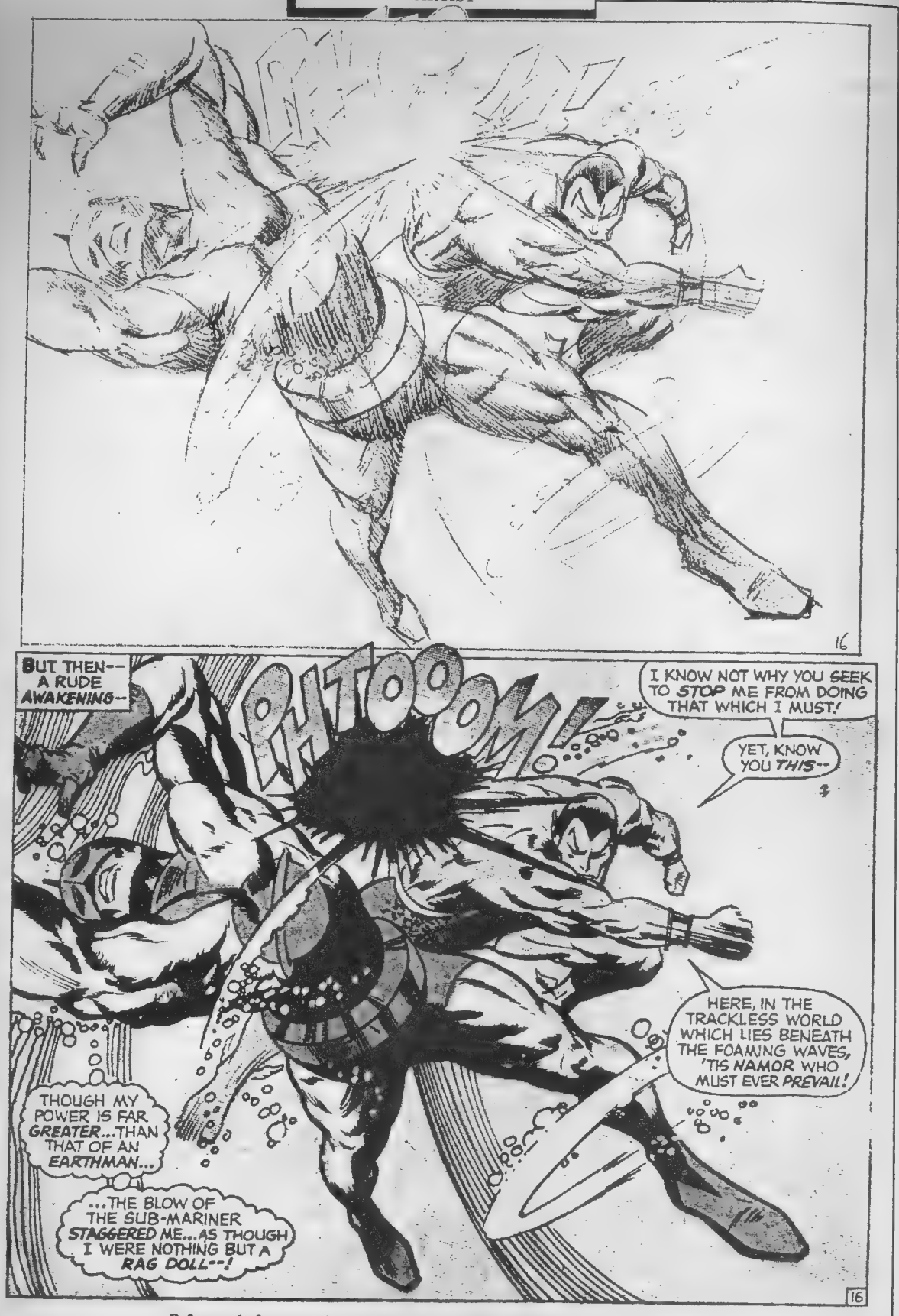
DAVID: *He didn't like your work?*

GENE: No, he didn't care for it. He tried to be polite about it. I had him up for dinner one night and I was waiting for the outcome of what he thought of it, and he didn't think too much of it. I could tell, I could read between the words of what he was saying. He's very much a stickler for perfection. **Kurtzman** wasn't there with the praise, I can tell that, and I knew it was the last time I would be getting a job from him. And it was! *(Laughter.)* That was the long and the short of it. I made an attempt, I made a try — 'cause I nagged the life out of him to give me an opportunity to do it — and it just didn't come off.

DAVID: *DAREDEVIL.*

GENE: I liked doing DAREDEVIL, it was fun. Stan always gave me the most latitude with *anything* that I did for him. Stan was always a pleasure to work for. He's a very animated guy, I'll tell you. *(Laughter.)* Very! If he wants to make a point, he'd think nothing of standing on top of his desk to make the point. *(Laughter.)* He'd stand right up there and say, "Now *this* is how I *want* this super-hero to look!" — standing up there like the desk was a stage. He would do that, and he would get the point across. Stan was full of enthusiasm, had a *tremendous* amount of energy — probably still does — and that was the relationship. It was very easy to work for Stan. And if he didn't like something . . . in my younger




16
BUT THEN-- A RUDE AWAKENING--
PHTOOOM!
I KNOW NOT WHY YOU SEEK TO STOP ME FROM DOING THAT WHICH I MUST!
YET, KNOW YOU THIS--
HERE, IN THE TRACKLESS WORLD WHICH LIES BENEATH THE FOAMING WAVES, 'TIS NAMOR WHO MUST EVER PREVAIL!
THOUGH MY POWER IS FAR GREATER...THAN THAT OF AN EARTHMAN...
...THE BLOW OF THE SUB-MARINER STAGGERED ME...AS THOUGH I WERE NOTHING BUT A RAG DOLL--!
16

Before and after panel from CAPTAIN MARVEL (Below, inks by V. Colletta).

On Ragamuffins: "I grabbed it. I love to draw children."

WRONG! THE REASON FOR A SET OF WHEELS IS TO CRUISE FOR BABES!
D-UH, YEAH, OL' BUDDY! LISTEN TO 'EM! NO WHEELS, NO DATES!
IN OTHER WORDS, YOU CAN'T PICK UP CHICKS WITH-OUT A CAR! IT'S A FACT OF NATURE!
THAT'S WHY WE'RE HELPING YOU PICK OUT A NEW CRATE FOR YOURSELF!

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ARCHIE'S PALS "N" GALS #197, 1988 — by Margopoulos, Colan and Esposito.

years he would correct lots of things, but he would always do it in a way that was not offensive.

DAVID: *CAPTAIN MARVEL, which you did for a very short time.*

GENE: I don't know if I had such a good time with it. It was brief and it's not very vivid in my mind. I remember how I drew Captain Marvel, but I don't know if I had such a good time with that.

DAVID: *Do you have more memories of BROTHER VOODOO?*

GENE: I didn't care for BROTHER VOODOO.

DAVID: *It was such a bizarre, off-the-wall concept.*

GENE: Right, and I didn't care for it. I think **Len Wein** had something to do with that.

DAVID: *Jack Kirby.*

GENE: I think Jack is a *natural* for comics. He's just a natural-born comics man.

DAVID: *Steranko said many many years ago that if Jack Kirby had never been born there would have never been anything called comics.*

GENE: Yes. My first experience with **Jack Kirby** — not personally but about as close as I came to him at that time — was to see his original work. I couldn't believe human hands had touched it! It was *perfect!* Absolutely, I thought it was something derived from a machine, it was so beautifully done.

DAVID: *The power of his work is incredible! Jack Kirby is one of the few people in the world who is able to draw a figure starting from any part of the body. I've seen him start from a toe and work his way up, and I don't understand how he does it because he doesn't make any guidelines, layouts, nothing.*

GENE: It's just the way he does it, it's just his turn of mind; it's the way he thinks.

DAVID: *Next, RAGAMUFFINS.*

GENE: Oh, I loved that. I'm always into nostalgia, I'm always talking about my boyhood and things that I remember from that age. Don approached me on it and I *grabbed* it, because I love that stuff. I love to draw children. They reproduced it from my originals. The editor of Eclipse, **Dean Mullaney,** you should go to Dean and ask him how to reproduce stuff from pencil. He's helped Comico. He's helped DC out — not that they listened. *(Laughter.)*

DAVID: *BLOODSCENT.*

GENE: Oh, I loved it, I think it came out well. The writer is *sensational!* **Dean Schreck** is his name, **Bob Schreck** is his brother. **Dean Schreck** is a very talented man. A very quiet, unassuming type of person, shy — but boy is he one first-class writer! I wouldn't mind him being on *anything* that I would do.

DAVID: *BATMAN*

GENE: I loved doing BATMAN because I had a chance for a little mystery. It was kind of a *weird* type of thing, there was *mystery* in doing BATMAN.

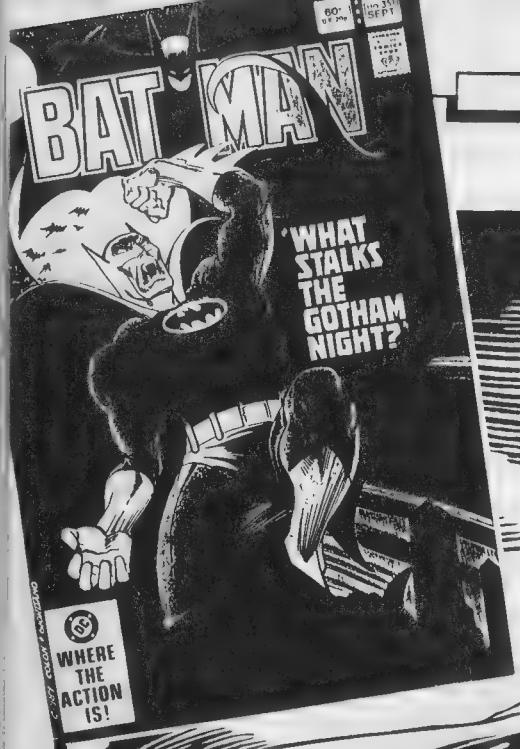
DAVID: *Wasn't it kind of like DARE-DEVIL without the swinging?*

GENE: It was very much like DARE-DEVIL except that he had a cohort with him, you know. The two of them were always sailing through the air. But I liked it because of the mystery value. In one issue they turned him into a vampire.

DAVID: *The vampire cover, in fact, was never used. The figure was redrawn and inked in by Ernie Colon. What's the story behind that?*

GENE: I don't know anything about that, nothing. I don't know what happened.

The original unpublished cover to BATMAN #351, with inks by Frank Giacoia. Insert: The published cover by Ernie Colón. Note: the bottom portion of Gene's was used.



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Pencil page from Gene's very first BATMAN work for DC Comics.

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Panel from the very first issue of Marv Wolfman's (DARK) NIGHT FORCE #1.

On Batman: "I liked it because of the mystery value."

THOR WALKS THE GLEAMING STREETS OF GOLDEN ASGARD, HOME OF THE IMMORTAL GODS.
HARK! WHAT STRANGE, NEW IMMORTAL GOD IS THIS? THE ASGARDIANS LEAVE HIM OFFERINGS! AS SURE AS MY NAME IS THOR, THE GOD OF THUNDER,—I MUST LEARN WHAT TRANSPIRES HERE IN THE LAND OF MY FATHER, ODIN.
WHAT MANNER OF NEW UN-NAMED GOD IS THIS YOU WORSHIP, MY FRIEND?
HUSH, SIRE! I-I-I MUST NOT SPEAK OF THE UN-NAMED GOD, OR I WILL BE TURNED TO COSMOS-DUST THIS INSTANT.
WHAT HAVE YE—AND ALL THESE OTHER ASGARDIANS—INSIDE YON PACKAGES—PLACED SO DILIGENTLY UPON YON GOLDEN ALTARY
MY LORD, I SPEAK NAUGHT BUT LIVING TRUTH—'TIS DELICIOUS HOSTESS® CUP CAKES WHICH WE OFFER TO APPEASE THE MIGHTY UN-NAMED ONE! 'TIS THE ONLY THING HE WILL ACCEPT. CHOCOLATY ICING AND CREAMED FILLING.
HOLY CENTAURS AND SATYRS! NOW THE MYSTERY RESOLVES ITSELF. TRULY AN IMPOSTER!!
Copyright © 1976 Hostess Foods, Inc.

A rare piece from 1976, Gene Colan & Jack Abel's "ad" for Hostess Cupcakes (starring Marvel's Thor).

DAVID: *Something else that has interested me is the fact that you seem to do such a low ratio of covers for books that you handle the artwork within. Why is that?*

GENE: I don't know. If they have to have a cover done right away, they'll get whoever's on hand. They're always falling behind deadlines, these companies, and they need something done quickly. I don't know, maybe they don't like my covers.

DAVID: *In the case of DRACULA you didn't do covers for four or five years, and then you started doing just about every one. And there have been other things, such as DAREDEVIL, where you did just about every one of those until Marie Severin and a few other people started coming in. Do you have any inner feelings about covers? In other words, do you really like doing covers?*

GENE: Oh, yes I do.

DAVID: *Does it kind of piss you off when you don't get to do the covers?*

GENE: Yeah, I don't like that because I feel that they've overlooked me.

DAVID: *It's kind of a cheat to the audience, don't you think?*

GENE: I think so, yeah. I think that whoever did the artwork inside should be doing the cover. But, you know, you're dealing with editors and publishers and they don't always agree, and they pay the tab so what can you tell them!

DAVID: *Now, with BATMAN you did one story that Harlan Ellison wrote.*

GENE: Yes.

DAVID: *How was it working with Harlan? Was it a full script?*

GENE: It was a full script; very well done; very cinematic. It's easy to follow his work.

DAVID: *I know you kind of frowned on working from full scripts — how is it that you did not frown on working with a full script with Harlan?*

GENE: I think it was because there was not much direction, not that I remember. Very simply laid out, you know. Not very wordy, not many captions, brief sentences — it was a very simple, enjoyable little plot. I enjoyed it, it was fun! Listen, he's a film man. Everybody has a style and preferences, and I'm my way, you know. I do things a certain way.

DAVID: *You're more flexible than I had thought, believe it or not.*

GENE: You'd never get my wife to admit to that. *(Laughter.)*

DAVID: *I would love to do an interview with her.*

GENE: My wife has been my absolute best supporter. My career has blossomed mainly because of her direction, she's been wonderful to me.

"The first things I saw of Gene's were fine arts —

You'll have to turn this page around . . . Artwork from a homemade Christmas card from the Colan family.

Copyright ©1989 Gene and Adrienne Colan.

then I saw what he did for a living, *stick* figures!"

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Harlan Ellison & Gene Colan came together for this, the last BATMAN issue by Gene (DETECTIVE #567, '86). At that point, Gene had pencilled a total of 785 pages containing BATS (Bob Smith inked this panel).

DAVID HAMILTON: *This lady is the driving force behind Gene Colan.*

ADRIENNE COLAN: *(Laughter.)*

DAVID: *It's true! You gave Gene an appreciation in his work that apparently for many years he didn't have himself.*

ADRIENNE: I'll have to admit to that one.

DAVID: *What background did you have, as far as art appreciation, that you could appreciate his work when he couldn't?*

ADRIENNE: That's a very good question. My grandfather was a sculptor. My uncle, although he never made a career of it, dabbled in all types of *craft* art, making jewelry. I had a cousin who painted; again, nothing professional. The only one who did it as a profession was my grandfather, though he was not particularly financially successful. *(Laughter.)* But that's not uncommon to anyone in the arts. My father was gifted at making *anything*. He made his own furniture, his own electrical fixtures, his own stereo cabinets, including the radio parts.

And I was born with a gift and a love for music, in fact I wanted to be a professional singer. I studied music, and I studied ballet and tap and all of those things, and that still is primarily my love. The theater, live entertainment. I, also, haven't done anything on a professional level, or even *pursued* any of those classes into my adult years, because I met and married Gene at 20 and really kind of got caught up in his world. As to why I was able to *appreciate* . . .

DAVID: *What did you first see by him?*

ADRIENNE: Actually, I didn't see comic art, the first things that I saw of Gene's were fine arts. They were things that were done in an interim period from the days where he had told **Bob Kanigher** that he belonged in an insane asylum or something! *(Laughter.)* The day that he did that at DC he kind of temporarily lost his spot there in the world of comics; and simultaneously Marvel kind of fell apart down to just **Stan Lee** and **Jack Kirby.** Gene was forced out of the industry, more or less, for that temporary period of time.

He spent his time working up samples to get back into being able to make his living in art, which is all he wanted to do. And it was *that* that I saw, fine arts. However, when I met him he was *already* back in the world of art. He was working for an art studio. The only accounts they had were these drawings for school educational things, like you see on slides, which are nothing more than stick figures. So, the first things I saw of Gene's were fine arts — which are all hanging in our home to this day, and some of which have won awards — and then I saw what he did for a living, which was *stick* figures! Gene being Gene, he tried to put in some shading and lighting and weight and all of this, and of course he was always told to erase it.

The minute I caught wind of that, and how he would yawn all day at his work — they weren't allowing him to really continue to *stretch* — I told him to quit. He said, "How are we going to live?" I just told — I was young and very feisty — I just said, "Listen, it would be an honor to starve and see you unemployed rather than to see you employed and working beneath what you are capable of doing." I feel that it is just *death* to an artist's *soul* when they have to work *beneath* what they're capable of. I mean, most artists not only want to do what they can do, but they want to grow.

LAST WORD

Comics Interview 234 Fifth Ave. Suite 301 New York, NY 10001

A NOTE FROM NEAL

Dear Editor,

Rather than have a misconception go uncorrected, I would just like to make a brief mention re: your interview with **Tom Lyle.** Tom is asked why his Robin's hair is different from my version. I don't quite know how Tom perceived that question, but in fact, I'm still waiting for Tom to make Robin's hair as spiked as I did in the poster. In fact, I was asked to take the spiking out of Robin's hair for the poster. Instead, I spiked it even more.

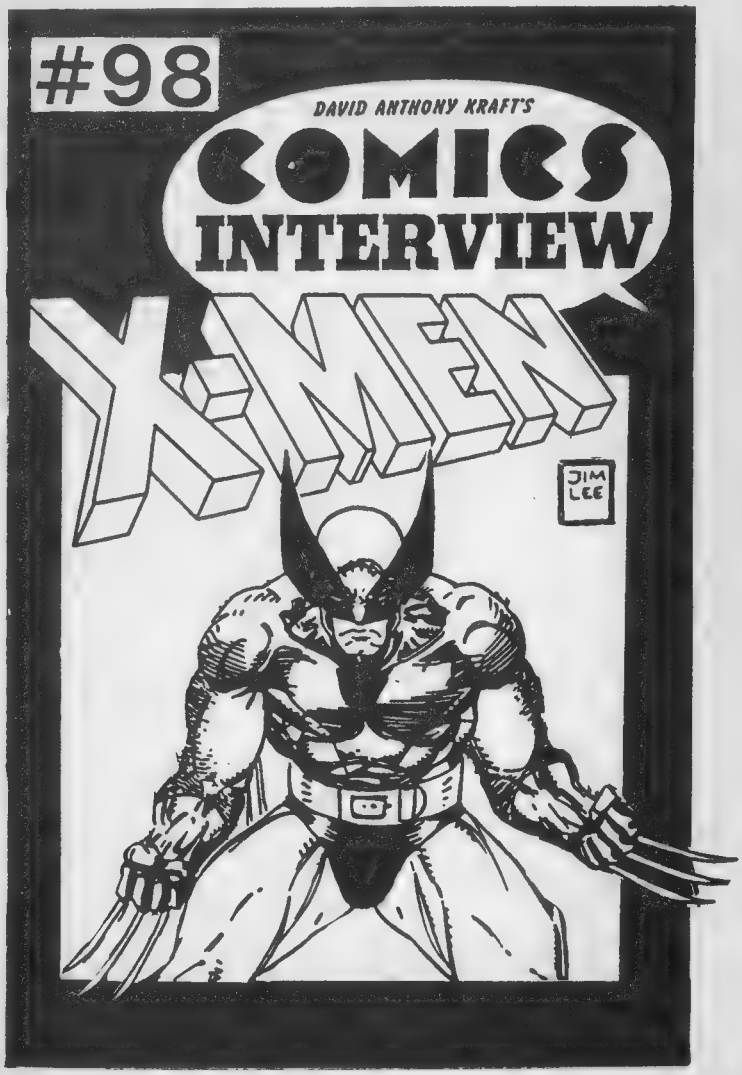
I think Tom could further improve his Robin by making his face less chubby.

Parenthetically, it might be interesting for your publication to ask DC to show the various incarnations that Robin went through in the design process in order to arrive at the present concept.

Finally, I thought I would mention that I think Tom's interpretations improve with each issue.

Although, I must say, **Jim Lee's** Jubilee makes a fine Robin.

Neal Adams
Continuity Publishing, Inc.
62 West 45th Street
New York, NY 10036



ANTI-INTELLECTUAL CHOWDERHEADEDNESS (POT CALLS KETTLE BLACK)

Dear Dave,

After dozens of issues in which every interviewee has cheerfully embraced the mainstream super-hero status quo (buttressed by sycophantic interviewers and fawning introductions), **Chester Brown** finally breaks rank by dismissing super-hero comics as a "dead-end genre" that will never mature. So of *course,* this is the time you choose to abandon your Mr. Neutral stance and rebut Chester, carefully positioning your rebuttal "Up Front" so that the unwary reader won't be exposed to his heresies without prior warning.

This merely confirms my earlier assertion (hotly contested by you) that COMICS INTERVIEW is a shill for the mainstream establishment.

The other remarks you make in the editorial, however, raise the frightening possibility that you do this not out of commercial expeditiousness, but for (of all things) philosophical reasons.

I must say that I find your dismissal of "the European model" of fiction as "dismal despairing existential helplessness" that "concede[s] defeat and chaos in the face of life," not to mention your libertarianspeak touting of the "competent man" aspect of super-hero fiction, to be the worst sort of anti-intellectual chowderheadedness.

Contrary to the notions held dear by the proudly know-nothing apologists for the cheapest and most obvious in pop culture, fiction is *not* simply a model for behavior, and work that depicts and confronts the ugly, despairing side of life is *not* a capitulation.

I remain convinced that works such as AMERICAN SPLENDOR, YUMMY FUR, RAW, SINNER, and the grimmer episodes of LOVE AND ROCKETS, which are habitually held up as being "negative," "depressing," or just plain "not fun," are a thousand times more positive, life-affirming, and even (in a dark way) *joyous* than any fluff-headed heroic fiction in recent memory.

At this juncture, with the accumulation of massive evidence to the contrary, it takes a special sort of willful blindness to claim that super-hero comics will ever be art fit for adult consumption. You

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LAST WORD

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guys are turning into the Flat-Earthers of the comics field.

Chester challenged this delusion, and for that, he had to be put in his place. I trust that when, two or three years from now, you finally once again interview a cartoonist whose ultimate dream *isn't* to ink THE X-MEN, that cartoonist will know to hold his or her tongue rather than to utter such blasphemies.

Kim Thompson
Fantagraphics Books
7563 Lake City Way
Seattle, WA 98115

BROWN STINKS

DAK-Man:

Thanks so much for exposing **Chester Brown** for the simpering pedant he is.

The interview by **Jay Torres** in issue #93 was an excellent example of the "give 'em enough rope" school of journalism. **Brown** thoughtlessly snapped at the bait and showed us all the paucity of what passes for his soul.

It was so enjoyably revealing to learn that this posturing effete who smugly derides superhero comics as a "dead end," who asserts that "the only adults who enjoy superhero comics are adults with stunted intellects and adolescent tastes;" this self-involved snob who seems to truly believe that his own puerile cartoons of a man crawling out of another man's anus, or a story about a man who shits a mountain of excrement, or depictions of badly-drawn, blood-covered geeks, are intrinsically superior to the story of CAPTAIN AMERICA, or WATCHMEN, or MIRACLEMAN, KILLING JOKE, **Wrightson's** THE CULT, or even ZOT! (to name but a few examples) is at bottom a "disillusioned fanboy" (your interviewer's words) who was rejected by the Big Two at his career's inception. The term "sour grapes" springs immediately to mind.

For the record, I am an adult in my 40s who knows **Vivaldi** from **Bach,** and **Chagall** from **Van Gogh;** yet I own and thoroughly enjoy all the "dead-end" works I just mentioned, among many others.

Now I know why **Brown's** stuff is so shallow, pretentious and smug (not to mention in such redolently bad taste), and why it has always put me off so intensely that, every time I have ever looked at it, it has demonstrated the "leaping book" phenomenon — you know, where the volume leaps from your hand to crash against the far wall seemingly of its own volition?

Brown is not the first to think that the time has come to shovel dirt on the superhero's grave, nor is he likely to be the last. Short-sighted naysayers like him have prophesied the same thing in every decade since the '40s.

However, I'll go on record here and now to say that superheroes, far from being a dead end, will still be developing, still be relevant, and will still be being read and enjoyed long after pretentious slime like YUMMY FUR is as forgotten as a bad smell long since carried away on the breeze.

Thanks again for another enjoyable issue.

Clif Langlois
2424 "C" Kenton Ct.
Santa Rosa, CA 95407

COMICS INTERVIEW IN YUGOSLAVIA

Dear Mr. DAK,

I'm very well aware that you're not supposed to care for the personal subscriptions, but I had to address you since:

(a) You're familiar to me since the days of your scripting chores at Marvel and the FOOM reign. I still have all the FOOMs, treasuring them for my three-year-old son when he grows up. I liked your handling of THOR and ERB material(s) and how you managed to entertain yourself by entertaining us, faithful FOOMers (or so it seemed). B'way, is your taste for loud'n'hard Rock'n'Roll still there . . .? Although we've never met, we shared the same passion for some bands. Remember **Rush?** O, boy . . .!

(b) I fell in love with COMICS INTERVIEW the very first moment I spotted it last November in one of the Forbidden Planet shops during my visit to London, England. I've purchased issues #83 and #84. Loved them and I'd love to love more.

Therefore, dear DAK, please find enclosed a year's subscription plus an order for back issues.

You see, **Mr. Kraft,** your COMICS INTERVIEW doesn't just interest me, it's some kind of a kid's passion for comics it awakes in me, a passion long lost many years ago, when rare travellers smuggled from abroad records and American comics for maniacs like myself. Although a professional, I really dig your magazine and care for it. Please, oh PLEEEASE don't tell me that there are some *sold out* back issues I'm ordering! That could kill me and you can imagine what that means — the dead do not renew their subscriptions.

Bojan M. Djukic
Len. Bulevar 199b/VI-21
11070 N. Beograd, Serbia
Yugoslavia — Europe

P.S. Excuse me, but how ended your and **Mr. Slifer's** hitch-hiking tour with hand-lettered signs back in the '70s . . .?

P.P.S. My kid's name is David, too!

Yours is one of those letters that makes my day, Bo! I'm always amazed when anyone remembers FOOM and my Marvel days (or is that "Marvel daze"?). And yes, I still assault the ol' eardrums with loud'n'hard rock'n'roll (Aerosmith's PUMP is now on my personal play list. Blue Oyster Cult's IMAGINOS isn't half bad, either.)

So I'm happy to hear that COMICS INTERVIEW rekindles your enthusiasm and brings back your bygone passion for the comics field. That has been the mission of this magazine from issue #1 and it's nice to know we haven't lost sight of a love for comics even after nearly nine years and 100 issues of INTERVIEW. Stay in touch and keep us informed of the Yugoslavian comics scene!

Oh, the hitch-hiking trip . . . Roger Slifer and I made it from New York, New York all the way to York, Nebraska, before hopping a bus for the rest of the trip to Lebanon, Oregon. Recently, Roger and I crossed paths at TSR/West, where we helped launch a new line of color comics. These days, Slifer is a producer/writer on the animated new syndication series, BUCKY O'HARE. Hey, who says I didn't teach him everything he knows? (Actually, he does.) — *DAK*

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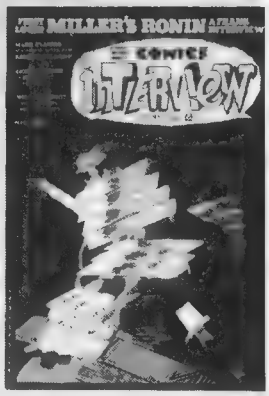
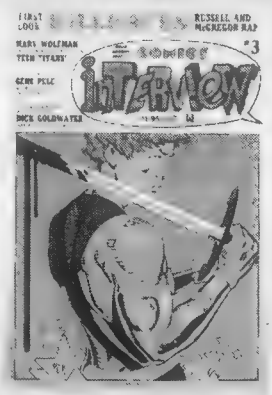
#1-$5.00 **Keith Giffen** on the making of THE OMEGA MEN — **Steve Gerber** speaks out on comics — X-MEN inker **Terry Austin** talks — Marvel's top man, **Jim Galton,** tells all — and much more in this premiere issue!



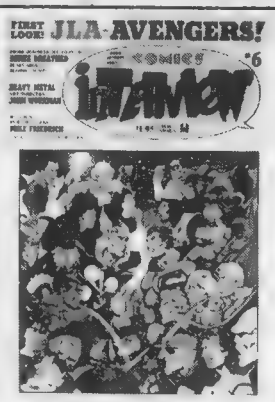
#2-$5.00 **Miller** raps about RONIN — **Mark Evanier** shares secrets of **Kirby's** NEW GODS — **Steve Gerber** asks **Will Meugniot** about DNAGENTS — **Gene Simmons** of KISS on comics — more! Cover by **Frank Miller.**



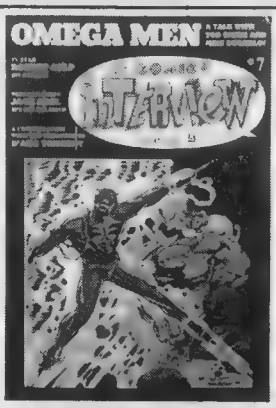
#3 COUNTS AS FIVE **Don McGregor** & **Craig Russell** on KILLRAVEN — Origins of NEW TEEN TITANS told by **Marv Wolfman** — **Howard Chaykin** on AMERICAN FLAGG — French comics by **Neal Adams** — Cover by **Russell.**

#4 COUNTS AS FIVE **Starlin** speaks about **WARLOCK, CAPTAIN MARVEL & DREADSTAR — DC's Dick Giordano,** part 1 — from **Foster** to **Frazetta,** the last **Roy G. Krenkel** interview — Cover by **Starlin.**

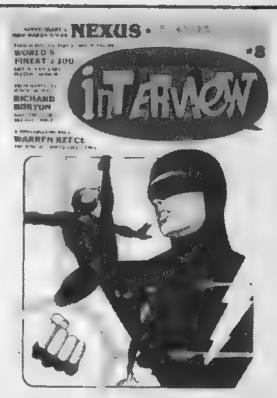
#5-$5.00 **Wendy & Richard Pini** — inside ELFQUEST, part 1 — **Stan Lee,** straight from the shoulder — DC's **Dick Giordano** part 2 — Origins of COMICO. Cover by **Wendy Pini.**



#6 COUNTS AS 3 **George Perez & Roy Thomas** tell all about JLA/AVENGERS feud — inside ELFQUEST, part 2 — **Berke Breathed** blabs about BLOOM COUNTY — more! Awesome cover by **Perez!**



#7-$5.00 Artist **Tod Smith** — inker **Mike DeCarlo,** too — D'ARC TANGENT — TV star **Robert Culp** talks about comics — Marvel artist **Jack Abel** OMEGA MEN cover by **Smith & DeCarlo!**



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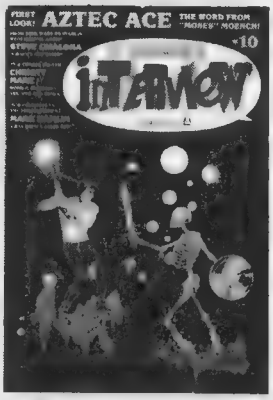
#9 COUNTS AS FIVE GOD-SIZE ISSUE **Walt Simonson,** the man and his art — grand master **Joe Kubert** gabs — A walk down memory lane with comics giant **Gardner Fox** — much, much more!! THOR cover by **Simonson.**



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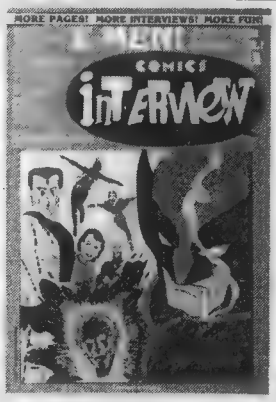

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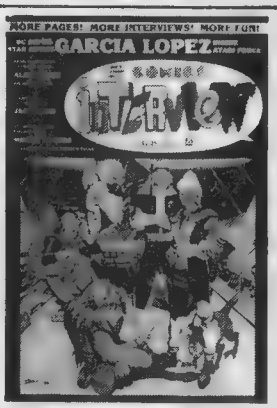

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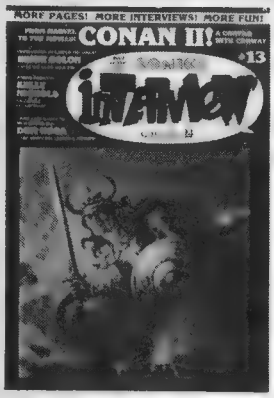

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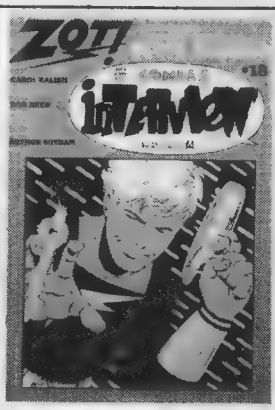

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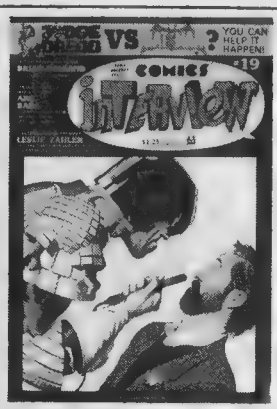

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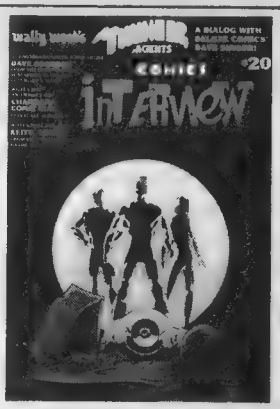

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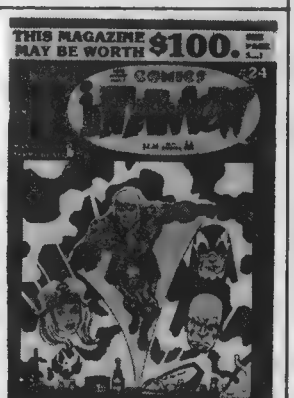

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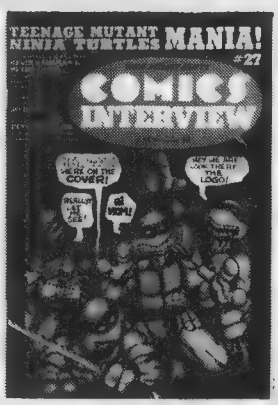

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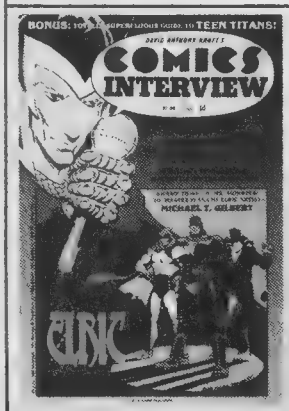

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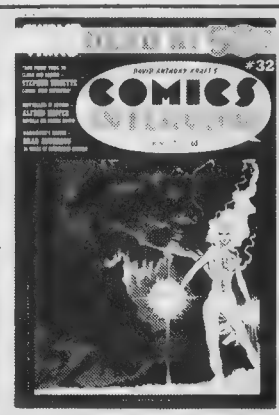

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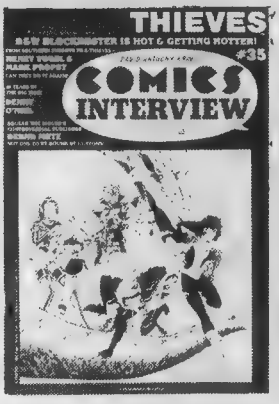

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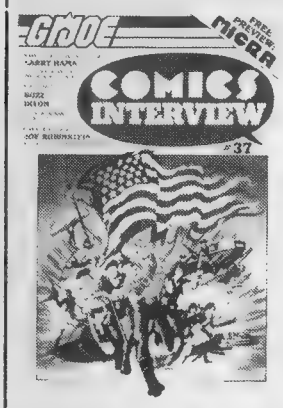

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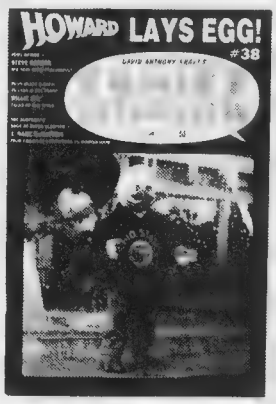

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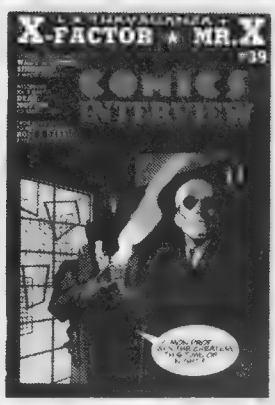

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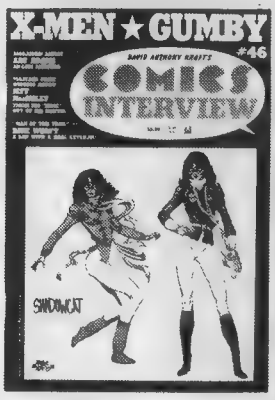

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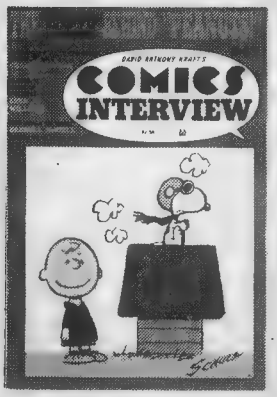

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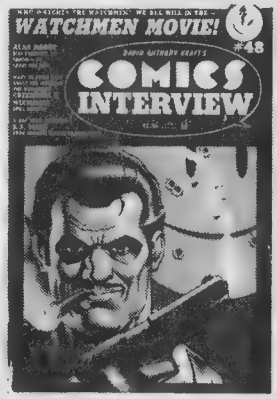

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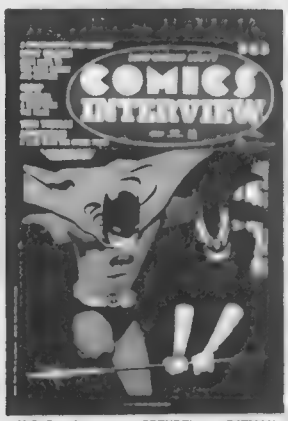

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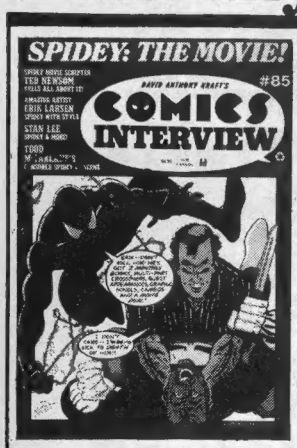

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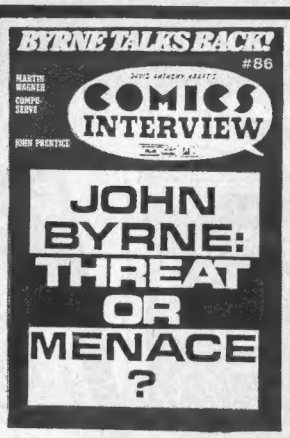

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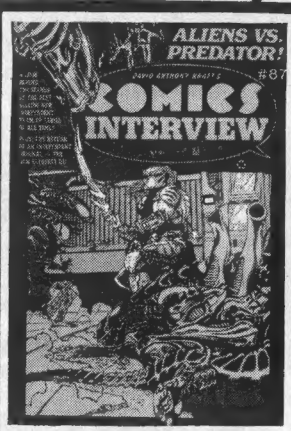

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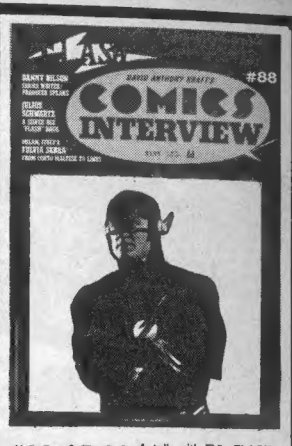

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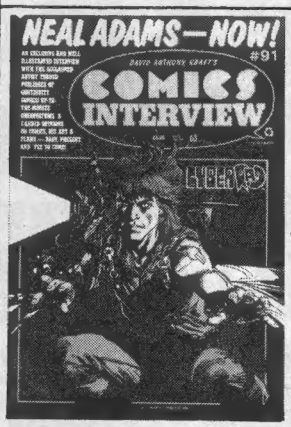

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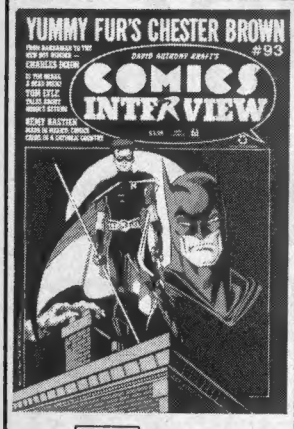

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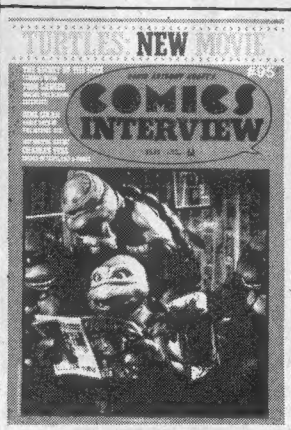

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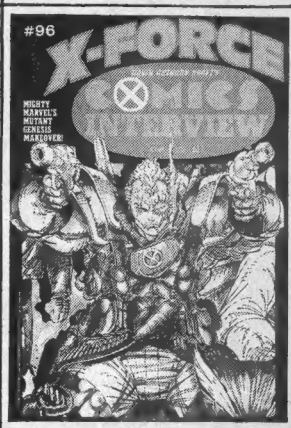

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